

Vietnam's Image as a tourism destination from the points of view of Finnish travellers

Tuyet Huynh

Bachelor's Thesis
Degree Programme in Tourism
2017



Author Tuyet Huynh	
Degree programme Tourism	
Report/thesis title Vietnam's Image as a tourism destination from the points of view of Finnish travellers	Number of pages and appendix pages 60 + 4
<p>This thesis aims to study the image of Vietnam tourism from the perspectives of Finnish people, especially in how they would prefer to travel to Vietnam, the motivations to travel there and how to improve Vietnam as a more attracting travelling destination.</p> <p>The theoretical framework of the research introduces Vietnam as a tourism destination following a 3 A's framework – accessibility, attraction and awareness. It also gives explanation to the functional characteristics of Vietnam tourism including scenery, price level, climate, nightlife and entertainment, national park, local infrastructure, architecture, historic sites, beaches and cuisines. The concept of destination image, the formation of destination image and cultural factors influencing destination image formation are also presented.</p> <p>Quantitative research method is majorly applied in this research and qualitative methodology with open-ended questions is also used to analyzed the questions in-depth and get more insights of the problem. The survey was distributed online by using Webropol online survey tool and on street-survey, it was conducted in May 2017 and in total 83 responses were collected.</p> <p>The key finding of the study indicates that Finnish people have a positive image about Vietnam. However, during the interview, a fraction of younger people under 20 years old still have little knowledge about Vietnam and what it could offer to tourists, while the senior age group is afraid of far travelling distance to Vietnam. Safety issue is said to be a big concern for many Finnish people when travelling to Vietnam. Therefore, information about Vietnam travelling safety guide and tourism police forces should be presented and developed to the tourists.</p>	
Keywords Finnish travellers, Vietnam, destination Image	

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Research problems and aims.....	2
1.2	Types of Tourists	3
2	Destination Image	4
2.1	Definition of Destination Image	4
2.2	Destination Image Formation	5
2.3	Cultural factors influencing destination image formation.....	8
3	The 3 A's of Vietnam	9
3.1	Introduction to Vietnam	9
3.2	Accessibility	11
3.3	Attractions.....	12
3.3.1	Ha Noi.....	12
3.3.2	Ha Long Bay	15
3.3.3	Hoi An	16
3.3.4	Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park	18
3.3.5	Ho Chi Minh City	19
3.3.6	Mekong Delta.....	21
3.4	Awareness	23
3.5	Functional characteristics of Vietnam tourism	23
3.5.1	Scenery/Natural Attractions.....	24
3.5.2	Cost/price level	24
3.5.3	Climate.....	26
3.5.4	Nightlife and Entertainment	28
3.5.5	National Parks/Wilderness Activities	29
3.5.6	Local infrastructure/Transportation.....	30
3.5.7	Architecture/ Buildings	33
3.5.8	Historic sites/Museums	34
3.5.9	Beaches.....	36
3.5.10	Cuisines/ Foods	39
4	Methodology	40
4.1	Research method.....	40
4.2	Questionnaires design	41
4.3	Research Plan	42
4.4	Reliability and validity.....	43
5	Data analysis and findings	44

5.1	Background information	44
5.2	Results from respondents of whether they have been to Vietnam.....	46
5.3	Reasons of travelling to Vietnam.....	47
5.4	Travelling experience in Vietnam from respondents who have been to Vietnam.....	47
5.5	Results from respondents of their motivations to visit Vietnam.....	48
5.6	Results from the respondents rating about the importance of the factors	49
5.7	Results from respondents about the level of agreement to the statements.....	50
5.8	Images and characteristics of Vietnam from the views of Finnish tourists	50
5.9	Suggestions to make Vietnam a more attractive destination	51
5.10	Results from respondents if they plan to travel to Vietnam in the near future .	51
6	Conclusions	52
	References	53
	Appendix 1. Destination Image.....	61



Figure 1: Map of Vietnam (Wiki Travel, 2011)

1 Introduction

Nowadays, more and more people from the West are travelling to the South or South East Asia for exotic culture, warm climate to seek for a sense of discovery and self-development. European people from Protestant countries including Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, the Netherlands, Germany and Great Britain are the most affluent travellers in South East Asia and “the biggest spenders per capital” in international tourism. (WTO). These countries regard “sustainable development” and “environment” issues to be the top notch of their countries development process. Vietnam, long known for its sunny days, pristine beaches, picturesque highlands, famous cuisines and friendly people, is one of the most attractive destinations in South-East Asia and it is now exceedingly on the rise in tourists’ top travelling list. Vietnam tourism has shown a tremendous growth in the past few years and it has contributed significantly to Vietnam’s economic development. According to World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), “the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in 2014 was VND182,066.0bn (4.6% of GDP) and it is expected to grow by 6.6%pa to VND370,902.0bn (4.8% of GDP) by 2025.”. (WTTC, p.3). The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP has a tremendous climb from VND400.000bn in 2015 to over VND700.000bn predictably in 2025. Especially, leisure travelling spending in Vietnam is a dominant component accounted for 89.7% in 2014 in inbound and domestic tourists as opposed to 10.3% in business spending. Foreign visitors have also taken up to 51.8% in spending in contrast to 48.2% of domestic spending. (WTTC, p6).

Vietnamese students are placed in the fourth place of international students studying in Finland after Russia, Germany, and China (Project Atlas) and thus Vietnam country has become familiar to the mind of Finnish people with Vietnamese culture and traditional food. However, Finns are still a new emergence in tourism in Vietnam and many Finns have opted for travelling to Vietnam in South East Asia. The number of Finnish tourists to Vietnam in recent years is still on a slow rise even though the country has implemented visa waiver for citizens of Finland (Vietnamtourism).

This paper researches about what type of an image of Vietnam Finnish tourists have about and how tourism marketers can improve and perform better in their tourism industry services to promote Vietnam as a more attractive destination to Finnish people. This paper mainly focuses on measuring well-known attractions across Vietnam, accessibility and the level of hospitality of local people and front line tourism service in Vietnam.

1.1 Research problems and aims

This paper will research about how Finnish tourists perceive Vietnam as a tourism destination. The research questions will be mainly focused on several questions:

- What kind of an image Finnish tourists have about Vietnam as a travel destination?
- How well different destinations are known by Finnish people?
- What motivates Finnish tourists to travel there?
- What are the key points to be focused on to improve the image of Vietnam as a tourism destination?

In conducting this research, four components of the image will be used in measuring Vietnam destination image, which are functional characteristics, attributes, holistic and psychological characteristics. Accessibility and awareness are also taken into consideration when building the survey in this research paper.

The results of the study aim to help tourism marketers to have a better understanding of Vietnam image from the view point of Finnish tourists. With a clear approach of Finnish travel motivations and travel preferences, tour operators and tourism marketers can improve their marketing strategies, package holidays and develop market segmentation in tourism. This study also helps Vietnam improve their image and attractiveness in the level of international scale.

Structured methodology in the form of Likert-type scales will be used to measure attributes of functional and psychological characteristics. Unstructured methodology with opened ended questions will be used to examine holistic impressions of Vietnam attractions. Both of this methodologies are useful to measure destination image in a more general image measurement research. Attractions, accessibility, and awareness in the 5A's framework of building successful tourism will also be examined in this survey as pull factors attracting Finnish tourists to Vietnam. The survey will be reached by Finnish people in the mean of online and street survey in Helsinki, Finland.

1.2 Types of Tourists

This paper researches about the types of tourists that Finnish people belong to and characteristics of Finnish tourists when travelling to Vietnam. This chapter gives explanations to different types of tourists and their travelling behaviours. Questionnaires of travelling behaviours in this theory part will be used to examine Finnish tourists travelling characteristics.

According to Cohen (1979), there are four types of tourists: organized mass tourists, individual mass tourists, drifters, and explorers. Organized mass and individual mass tourists are grouped in institutionalized tourists while drifters and explorers are non-institutionalized tourists.

Organized mass tourists have their trips organized by travel agents, tour operators. It is a group of tourists going to the same and mainstream places where the costs of the whole package for the trip are relatively at a low cost. They enjoy spending time in comfortable and familiar environment like staying in hotels, dining out in Chinese restaurants or reading their own language. This type of tourists prefers staying in “Environmental bubble” during their trip, which indicates that tourists in this group stay only in their comfort zone and have no desire to seek out adventure.

Individual mass tourists are interested in visiting popular destinations and travel to crowded places. The trips are planned and organized by tourists themselves, or they have fully control over their trip itineraries and schedules.

The explorers plan trips by themselves, they are comfortable to step out of their comfort zone to learn and speak the local language. However, they are also cautious about the host environment that if anything wrong happens, he might retreat to his “environmental bubble” to protect himself.

The drifters are willing to take risks and present fully in an unfamiliar environment in the host country. They aim to stay, learn, experience and immerse themselves in the local way of life, they are not afraid of physical demanding jobs to work during the visits to support their living costs. He might not have a plan of where to visit and he is the sole holder for his trip.

(Tourism and Hospitality Studies, p.34&35)

In Stanley Plog's theory, tourists can be classified into three categories: allo-centric, psycho-centric and mid-centric. Allo-centric tourists are interested in seeking new places, meeting new people and experiencing an unusual environment, and they prefer to plan their own travel arrangements. Psycho-centric tourists prefer to come in a big group in a familiar environment, typical foods, relax accommodations and safe travel destinations; they have fixed and structured travel plans and no expectation of unexpected coming activities. Mid-centric tourist is the most common type in Stanley Plog's tourist typologies, people belongs to this type have a tendency to seek out for adventure and meet new people in a certain way. (Tourism and Hospitality Studies, p.36).

2 Destination Image

The term "Destination Image" has been known since the mid1970s and it has generated many attentions from tourism marketers and tour operators. It is an important term to study when a destination is put to differentiate from a variety of competitors. Since tourists often attach certain images to different destinations, it's crucial to understand the images of the destinations in their mind in order for marketers to create an accurate strategies in creating plans for the destination.

2.1 Definition of Destination Image

Destination image is an important factor in increasing the number of visitors travelling to a destination (Hunt, 1975). As stated by Kotler and Gertner (2004), destination image is "*The sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about a place. Images represent a simplification of a larger number of associations and pieces of information connected to a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place*". (Kotler & Gertner 2004, p.42).

From the point of view of Lawson and Baud Bovy (1977, in Jenkins, 1999, p.2), a destination image is "the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imagination, and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place".

Milman and Pizam (1995) stated that destination image consists of three elements: the product which represents the quality of the destination; the second is the attitude and behaviour of the host destination; the last one is the environment which consists of weather, scenery, and facilities.

Gallarza et al. (2002) explained that the nature of destination image consists of four main characteristics: Complex, multiple, relativistic and dynamic. There is no universal agreement on the definition of destination image as "...image is one of those terms that will not go away...a term with vague and shifting meanings" (Pearce, 1988, p.162). Therefore, it is important for tourism marketers to get up-to-date information on the measurement of destination image for accurate tourism marketing strategies.

2.2 Destination Image Formation

According to Gartner, 1993, the formation of "Image of place" or "Destination image" consists of three agents: personal organic, destination generated induced, and experienced real agents. Personal organic images are general information generated randomly in everyday lives for example from the movies, newspaper reports, the internet, television, magazines, and personal sources like friends and family. Induced images are information actively collected by tourists for a specific destination information, for example from travel and tourism advertising, brochures, the internet, magazines, newspaper reports and travel agents. Real images are gained through real life experiences of a destination, or post-trip. In three level of agents, real images appear to have the highest credibility since it is directly experienced by visitors. Following is the organic image where people unexpectedly collect information about a place. Lastly, induced image are images that are intentionally formed by adjusting destination image to a degree and this has the least credible in the modification process. It is also noted that organic images and induced images are often overlapped which creates difficulty in distinguishing them. Organic images that are presented in general media can be confused with induced images that are provided in the tourism context.

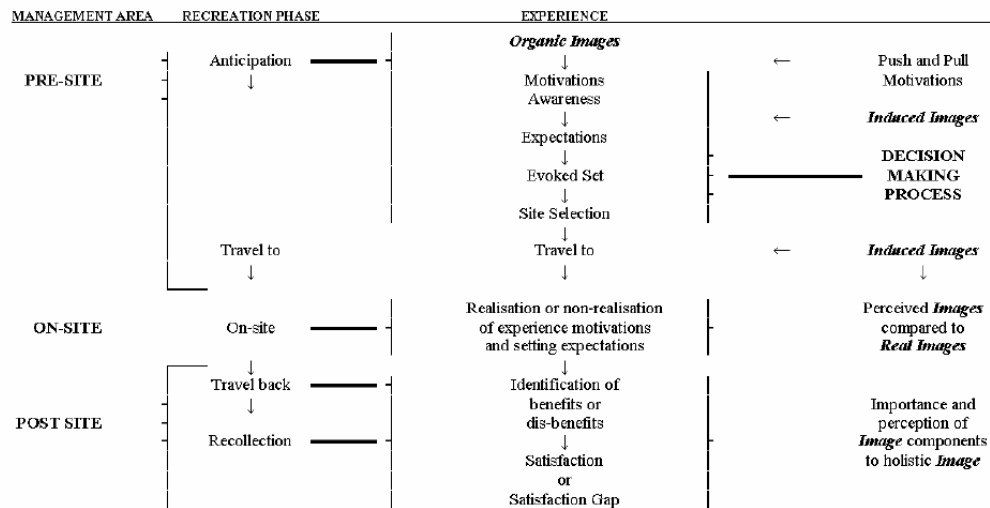


Figure 2. A Model of Tourist's Image Formation and its role in decision-making (Croy and Kearsley, 2002)

The figure demonstrates tourist's image formation in travelling to a destination described in three processes: pre-site, on-site and post-site, along with three agents of destination image which are organic images, induced images, and real images. In pre-site, tourists have an intention to travel ignited by organic images seen in everyday lives, it is a motivator in the beginning of travelling decision-making process. Other motivations that make tourists selecting travelling to a place are push and pull factors. Push factors are psychological motivation tourists have about their trip, the reasons are to escape their daily routine, to gain self-privileged, to seek for adventure, to seek for medical treatment or relaxation, it can be visiting a friend, spending summer time with the family or joining a sport in another country in order to fulfil their personal's desire. Pull factors are external desires tourists have about a place they would like to travel to. It is usually based on their prior knowledge, perceptions, external information from friends, family or social media. They generally have a clear image and ideas about the destination for its climate, attractions, culture, language and expectation. (Mahmood Khan, Michael Olsen & Turgut Var, 1993). In this stage, induced images appear in decision-making process as tourists are purposely seeking for the destination that is first motivated by organic images. The induced images that are seen by tourists will eventually lead them to make the decision of travelling to a place. In the second stage, on-site is when tourists' setting expectations of a new destination will be compared with real images that they are experiencing. In the last stage, tourists recollect their post-trip experience, satisfaction and other components like cognitive – relating to intellectual, knowledge, and belief; affective – relating to how tourists feel and evaluate destination

images; and conative – how tourists make future travel decision after visiting a place; these three components of destination image will influence their intention to revisit the destination. (Pearson).

According to Echtner & Brent Ritchie (2003), there are two components in measuring destination image which are attribute-based and holistic continuum. In attribute-based, one can measure “Scenery, attraction, accommodation, facilities and price level”, while in holistic continuum are “friendliness, safety and atmosphere”. (Echtner & Brent Ritchie, 2003)

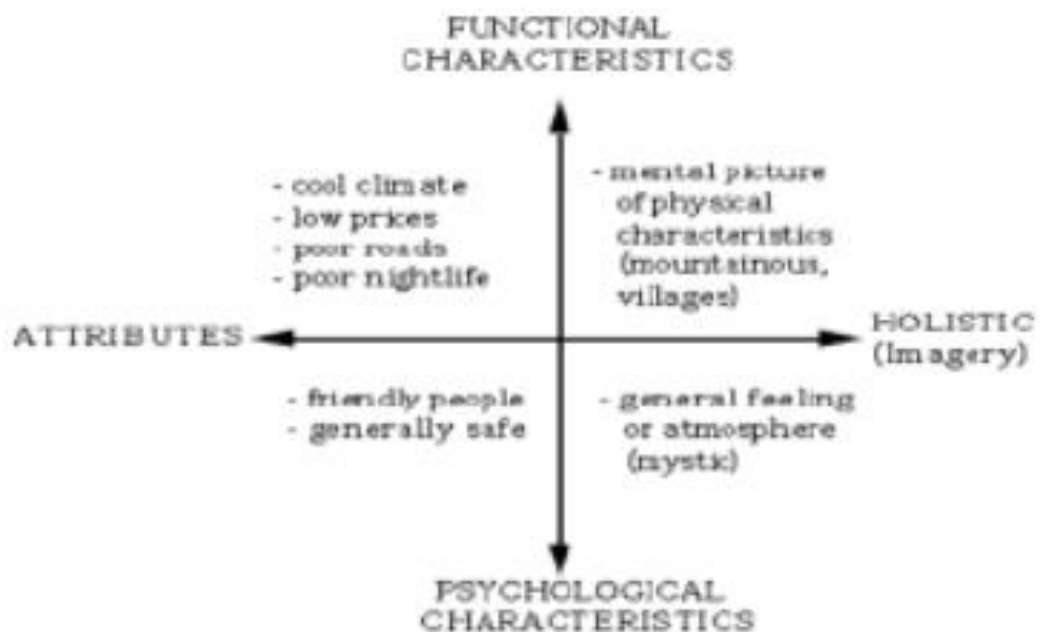


Figure 3: Four components of Destination Image (The Journal of Tourism Studies, 2003)

The figure explains the concept of destination image into four components: functional characteristics, psychological characteristics, attributes and holistic.

Functional characteristics refer to things that can be measured or physical, for example, natural attractions, price levels, climate, tourist sites, nightlife and entertainment, sport facilities, wilderness activities, ect... Psychological characteristics are intangible objects or abstract, for example, reputation, quality of service, family or adult oriented, opportunity to increase knowledge, atmosphere, relaxing, different cuisine, different customs and culture, ect... The figure also demonstrates unique features of the destina-

tions that are mentioned when referring to that destinations (Pearce, 1988; MacCannell, 1989), for example, Disneyland in California, Eiffel tower in Paris, Taj Mahal in India, Pisa in Italy, ect,...

The operationalization of destination image includes measuring both attributes and holistic functions regarding to functional and psychological characteristics. Structured methodologies are used in measuring attributes in a listed scale ranging from functional to psychological attributes. Unstructured methodologies or open-ended questions are suitable for measurement in holistic impressions and unique features of the destination. (Echtner & Brent Ritchie, 2003)

2.3 Cultural factors influencing destination image formation

In destination image formation process, many factors influence the decision making of tourists to a destination, for example television, news, friends, family and real life experience. In addition to that, cultural factors are also important elements that influence tourist decision-making process towards travelling to a place. Zhao (2006) explained the causes of cultural differences in three points - "geographical location, the concept of cultural distance and personal values". Tourists from different cultures and countries travelling to the same place have different perceptions towards that place. The disparities are formed by "distinctions in history, traditions and values of cultures" (Frochot and Legohere 2007, p.184). In the view of Zhao, firstly, people living geographically far away from the destination have lesser information about the place than people living closer by. This "distance factor" also shows that people living from a further distance tend not to have "realistic" or "complex" image of the destination (Blackwell et al. 2001 cited Zhao 2006, Frochot & Legohere 2007, p.184). Secondly, "cultural distance" can be understood that the further the distance between two countries, the bigger the gap of cultural disparities. Thus, people are generally more eager and fascinated to travel to a destination that has a wider gap of differences in race, language, culture, economic, society, belief and lifestyle. (McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990). For example, Asians travelling to Paris have different travelling behaviours, perceptions, the level of enthusiasm, expectations than people from Berlin travelling to Paris. Thirdly, "personal value" is belief, knowledge, attitude, principles, ideas of what we believe are important to us. These values are formed by tradition, custom, culture, brought up environment and life experience and it can be changed as we re-evaluate the values by times. These core value generates people's behaviour and thus influence their travel decision-making and destination image. (Madrigal & Kahle, 1994)

3 The 3 A's of Vietnam

This chapter will focus on a 3A's tourism requirement for a successful tourism management, which are accessibility, attractions and awareness. These elements are the focused points of the survey to measure destination image of Vietnam from the perspective of Finnish travellers. The chapter provides several sections: Firstly it gives general information about Vietnam tourism and Vietnam as a country; secondly it explains different airlines operated from Finland to Vietnam and visa information for Finnish tourists; thirdly different popular destinations are presented to give readers a glimpse of Vietnam tourism offerings; lastly awareness is one of the three measuring destination image elements is explained.

Three elements in this paper are selected from the 5 A's framework for a strong tourism destination which is attractions, accessibility, amenities, accommodation and awareness (Tourism Western Australia).

3.1 Introduction to Vietnam

Vietnam is an attractive tourist destination for many visitors from all over the world. It is one of the most beautiful places in South-East Asia with primal rainforests, idyllic beaches, tranquil bays, coral islands, mountain sceneries and picturesque valleys. Vietnamese people are hospitable and warm-hearted welcoming foreigners with love and joys. Not only that, Vietnam is also a paradise for amazing cuisines and various types of street food styles. The number of tourists coming to Vietnam is on the rise in both forms of domestic tourists and international tourists. According to Vietnam national administration of tourism, the number of domestic trippers in 2015 has a strong growth at 48% in comparison with last year at 10%. In term of international visitors, people travel by air takes up the biggest amount at 5,438,933 in 8 months of 2016, with China topped up the list at 1,752,526 people travelling to Vietnam. Following by that is Korea (1,005,057) and Hong Kong (22,805), Thailand (171,420), Italy (34,977) and Spain (35,619) are also popular countries visiting Vietnam. In the eight months of 2016, around 11,222 Finnish people visited Vietnam, up to 102.9 percent compared to 2015 (Vietnam national administration of tourism). The number of Finnish tourists to Vietnam has been increasing thanks to the visa-free program that permits them to visit up to 15 days starting from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2019 (World Travel Guide). Even though the rise of Finnish tourists is trivial towards other Asian countries and European

countries, Vietnam appears to be a prominent tourist market in the recent years for Finnish tourists. Finnair – Airlines of Finland has collaborated with other airline companies from Vietnam to expand its flying routes for demand in recent years, including Vietnam Airlines, Jetstar, and Cathay Pacific from Hong Kong. The company has also planned to open new representative offices in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City. (Vietnam Online).

Bordering China to the north, Laos to the northwest, Cambodia to the southwest and Malaysia across the South China Sea to the southeast, Vietnam is ranked at the 14th the most populous country in the world and at the eighth most populous country among Asian countries (Vietnam population: 91,700,000 estimated in 2015). (Wikipedia, Vietnam).

Vietnamese is the official language in Vietnam and spoken by a majority of people in Vietnam. There are also minority groups speaking other languages than Vietnam, including Tay, Muong, Cham, Khmer, Chinese, Nung and H'Mong. There are 45.3% of Vietnamese who are in groups of indigenous religions, 16.4% to Buddhism, 8.2% to Christianity, 0.4% other faiths, and there are 29.6% of people who are not religious.

Ao dai is Vietnam national dress worn by both man and women in the past. Nowadays, Ao dai is required student uniform for girls in many high schools in Vietnam, men only wear Ao dai in some occasions. Talking about Vietnamese cuisine, Pho is one of the most famous Vietnamese dishes not only favoured by locals but also foreigners. Local Vietnamese foods target in healthy ingredients with minimal use of oil, and lots of vegetables and herbs. (Wikipedia).

Vietnam is a land of miracle, its nature is blessed with heart-touching magnificent landscapes stretching from North to South in an S-shaped country of 1,650 kilometers of distance and 3,260 kilometers of coastline (Wikipedia, Geography of Vietnam). With a unique value of wide diversity, culture and architecture are home to eight UNESCO recognized world natural and cultural heritage. Natural heritage sites are Ha Long Bay (1994), Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park (2003); cultural heritage sites are Complex of Hue Monuments (1993), Hoi An Ancient Town (1999), My Son Sanctuary (1999), Central Sector of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long – Ha Noi (2010), Citadel of the Ho Dynasty (2011); mixed heritage site is Trang An Landscape Complex (2014). (UNESCO, Vietnam).

Son Doong cave, “The Great Wall of Vietnam” is the world’s largest cave recently discovered in 2009 by a British caver group led by Howard Limbert. This cave is located in

Quang Binh of Vietnam and said to have a history of 2-5 million years ago (Son-doongcave). This major discovery has drawn attentions of many experts and travellers to visit.

3.2 Accessibility

Finnish citizens are allowed to enter Vietnam with visa exemption for a period of 15 days from 01 January 2015 to the end of 31 December 2019 (also including Russia, Japan, Korea, Denmark, Norway and Sweden), therefore it's advisable to apply for a visa before leaving to the destination if one intends to stay longer than 15 days. Vietnam also follows visa-free system for up to 30 days for tourists from ASEAN countries except for Brunei. This legislation will be reviewed and renewed in accordance with the law of Vietnam and this new regulation has opened up many opportunities for Vietnam Tourism. (Vietnam Visa Cost).

Travelling from Finland to Vietnam can be carried by Finnair – the largest air corporation in Finland, headquarter in Vantaa and operating in Helsinki-Vantaa Airport. Finnair airlines have opened routes to Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City with direct and indirect flights several times a week. With direct flights to Ho Chi Minh City, or indirect flights with Finnair partner's in Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangkok (Finnair). Flights from Helsinki to Ho Chi Minh City and Ha Noi can also be purchased with Qatar Airway, Cathay Pacific, Turkish Airlines and Aeroflot airlines companies with at least one stopover. The flight hours from Helsinki to Vietnam can be reached at the fastest at 10 hours or at an average of 14 hours. Finnair has collaborated with Vietnam airlines, Jetstar and Cathay Pacific from Hong Kong for many new routes between Finland and Vietnam and also among other European destinations. (Vietnam Online).

In the case that Finnish travellers wish to make multiple trips to Vietnam in a short period of time while visiting adjacent countries, for example Lao, Cambodia or Thailand, they can issue one month or three months multiple entry visas upon arrivals. They can apply for the visa in "Vietnamvisaprovider.com", and collect invitation letter from Vietnam Immigration Office before travelling to Vietnam, then they will receive visa stamped through Vietnam entrance airport. If they hold a single-entry visa and decide to visit neighbouring countries upon arrival, they can apply for a new visa before leaving Vietnam or in the neighbouring country. (Vivu Travel)

3.3 Attractions

In this subchapter, readers will explore popular destinations in Vietnam including Ha Noi, Ha Long Bay, Phong Nha Ke Bang and National Parks, Ho Chi Minh and Mekong Delta. These destinations are just some of the most famous places to visit in Vietnam. Due to the time of the research, only a few places are selected to present in this section.

3.3.1 Ha Noi

Ha Noi is the capital of Vietnam and located in the northern region of the country. It lies in the Vietnam's Red River delta, nearly 90 km away from the coastal area and is the second largest city in Vietnam. Ha Noi is divided into 12 urban districts, one district-level town, and 17 rural districts and has a population of 7.7 million people (2015). (Wikipedia).

Ha Noi has a history of over 1000 years old and large parts of present Ha Noi are remnants of French-inspired architecture. History has given Ha Noi a wealth of temples, ancient citadels, unique theatre and stunning wilderness outside of the city.

Imperial Citadel of Thang Long located in the heart of Ha Noi is a UNESCO World Heritage Site obtaining its status in 2010. It was built in the 11th century by the Vietnamese Ly Dynasty and later expanded by the Tran, Le and final the Nguyen Dynasty. In the past, this place was used as a political center of Vietnam for 13 consecutive centuries and a capital of Vietnam for eight centuries. (UNESCO).

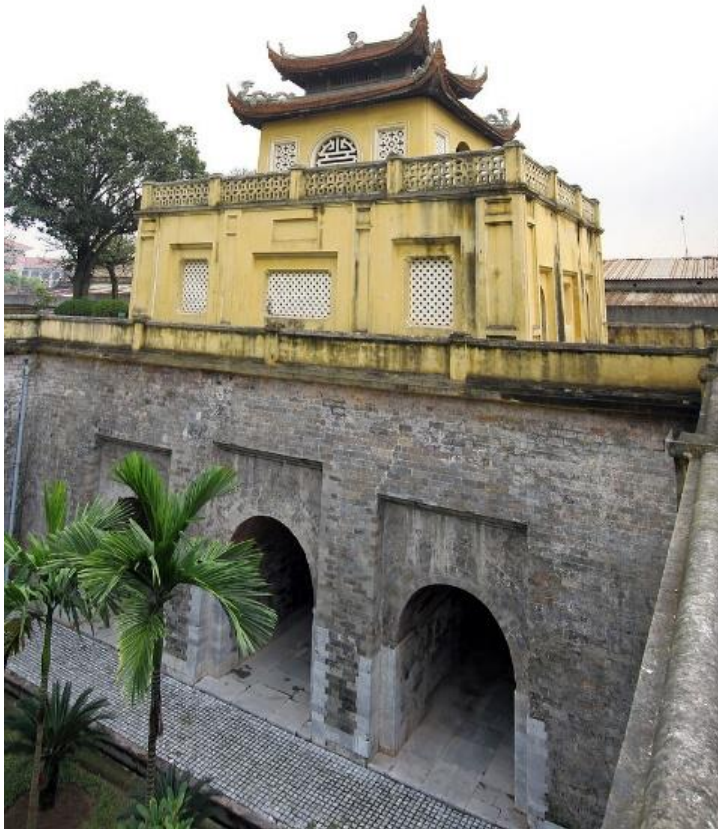


Figure 4: Imperial Citadel of Thang Long in Ha Noi (Wikipedia)

This building reflects a unique South-East Asian culture specific to the lower Red River Valley and has a fame for its longevity and a long seat for power during different ruling times (UNESCO).

San Joseph Cathedral located at 40 Nha Chung street is a popular place to visit in Ha Noi, it is a Roman Catholic cathedral that was built about 120 years ago. The cathedral's domes were designed in the Gothic style and followed the design of Paris Cathedral. The appearance of the Cathedral from the doors to window glass and religious paintings marked with Western style while the main interior part is designed in Vietnamese way with red and yellow as main colours.

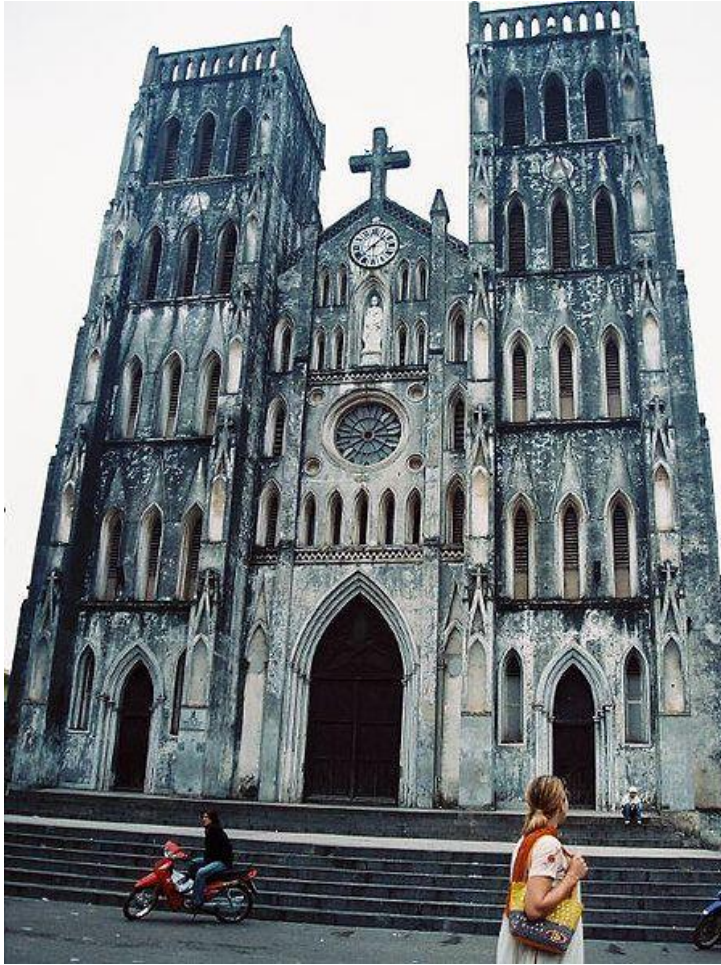


Figure 5: San Joseph Cathedral (Wikipedia)

San Joseph Cathedral nowadays has become a popular place for young people to meet up and “Lemon Tea” street where people sit on small plastic chairs on the sidewalk and drink Lemon tea that offered from street vendors, is a traditional way of relaxing for people in Vietnam. (Vietnam Online).

Ba Dinh Square is adjacent to the Ho Chi Minh complex is a place where many important and national historical events in modern time took place. It was built by French colony and known as Round Point Puginier. It marked an incredibly historic event that on September 2nd, 1945 the whole Vietnam unified as one under the rule of Ho Chi Minh, he read Vietnam Independence Declaration at this place. Twenty-four years later after the death of Ho Chi Minh, in-power Vietnamese government decided to build Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum on the square for people in his country to commemorate. (Vietnam Online, Ba Dinh Square).



Figure 6: Ba Dinh Square (Globespots)

Ba Dinh Square is also a popular gathering place for local families who prefer a walk, for elderly who want to exercise and young people who want to hang out. Entrance to Ho Chi Minh Complex is a serious place to visit, therefore, it's recommended to have dress code nicely covered, stand in line and behave well.

3.3.2 Ha Long Bay

Ha Long Bay is located in Quang Ninh province and was recognized as one of the world heritage sites in terms of the natural landscape by UNESCO in December 1994, the recognition was extended in 2000, and in 2011 it was listed as one of the seven natural wonders of the world. The bay is famous for its magnificent landscapes and a variety of 500 high-level plants in the bay with over 570 species of seabed creatures, around 180 coral species, nearly 150 species of seaweed and sea grass, and 19 species of aquatic plants. (Vietnam Tourism).



Figure 7: Ha Long Bay (Flickr)

On 18 February 2016, Ha Long Bay was also one of the four destinations in Vietnam selected by Hollywood filmmakers for capturing some stunning landscapes in their blockbuster movie projects, beginning with “Kong- Skull Island”. This was the first time that Vietnam have received Hollywood’s filmmakers to the country, and Deputy of Minister of Culture, Sport and Tourism, Mr. Vuong Duy Bien hoped that this opportunity could bring Vietnam to become a film studio for the world cinema in the future and attract more visitors to Vietnam because of its natural beautiful landscapes and hospitality of local people. (Vietnam Tourism).

3.3.3 Hoi An

Hoi An Ancient town is located in Vietnam’s central Quang Nam province, on the north bank near the mouth of the Thu Bon River. The site was regarded as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1999, with many buildings and architectures that demonstrate the living lifestyle of Vietnamese, foreign settlements – Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Dutch and Indians in the past from 15th to 19th centuries, it is also a remarkable history remain of South-East Asian trading port in the 16th and 17th centuries. The entire town is State property and carefully protected under the Cultural Heritage Law of 2001. (Wikipedia)



Figure 8: Lanterns in Hoi An (iha)



Figure 9: Hoi An (Flickr, Sacha Fernandez)

Hoi An is a perfect place for people who prefer a taste of countryside, relaxation and slow pace of life. On the 14th evening of every lunar month, Hoi An holds a legendary night when the entire town electricity is switched off and the streets are lighted up by an

array of colorful lanterns. This event takes place from 17:30 to 22:30 and vehicles are not allowed to enter the town, visitors can enjoy a walk across the streets with cultural music in a relaxing atmosphere. Not only that, Hoi An offers many great restaurants, beautiful beaches, a relatively good cost of accommodations and friendly local people who are willing to help foreigner retirees residing in this ancient town. (Vietnam Net).

3.3.4 Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park

Phong Nha Ke Bang is located in the central of Quang Binh Province in the North Central Coast region, it is a national park and was listed in UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003. It is a National Park and famous for containing the oldest karst system in Asia, formed in 400 - 450 million years ago. The park is well-known for pristine tropical ever-green jungle with more than 90% of which are primary forest, more than 100 types of mammal, 81 types of reptile and amphibian, more than 300 varieties of the bird inside Phong Nha. (Lonely Planet).



Figure 10: Paradise Cave in Phong Nha – Ke Bang (Yeu Quang Binh)

Hang Son Doong – cave of the mountain river was first discovered in 1991 by a man named Ho Khanh, but until 2009 that it was internationally known after a group of British Cave Research Association led by Howard Limbert. The cave is measured to be twice as large as Deer Cave in Malaysia which was considered the world's largest cave in the world.



Figure 11: Son Doong Cave (National Geography)

Son Doong Cave is more than 200 meters wide, 150 meters high, and approximately 5 km long that it has its own river, jungle and climate. Since 2013, Son Doong Cave has been opened for public by Oxalis Adventure and a limited number of visitors are allowed to join the tour, it is important to bring quality to the tour and as well to preserve their pristine nature. (Son Doong Cave)

3.3.5 Ho Chi Minh City

Ho Chi Minh City (Sai Gon) is Vietnam's biggest and busiest city with the population of 8,224,400, there are many immigrants from all over the world living and working. The city is divided into 19 urban districts and 5 rural districts, they are further subdivided into 5 commune-level towns, 58 communes, and 259 wards. District 1 is regarded as the financial center of Saigon and Vietnam and has the highest living standards. It is also known as the best place for shopping, foods, and gathering that many luxury brands, shopping centers and restaurants located. Dong Khoi and Nguyen Hue boulevard in district one are the city's two main commercial centres. (Wikipedia).



Figure 12: Sai Gon, district 1 (Ivivu)

Pham Ngu Lao is the city's western edge of district 1 where most travelling backpackers stay during their visiting. The streets are filled with people sitting on plastic chairs on the side road and enjoy a cup of Sai Gon beer. It has become a popular hangout and social gathering for most of Saigoneses and foreigners from sharing travel tips, meeting, practice English, people-watching to making friends. There are also many attractions that can be reached from Pham Ngu Lao within 10-minute walk like Ben Thanh Market, Ho Chi Minh Fine Arts Museum or less than 10-minute taxi to reach Reunification Palace and Mariamman Hindu Temple. (Vietnam Guide).



Figure 13: Gathering in Pham Ngu Lao street, district 1 (Backpackr)

Central Post Office located right in the heart of the city center is one of the oldest buildings in Ho Chi Minh City, designed by Gustave Eiffel and constructed between 1886-1891.



Figure 14: Central Post Office in Sai Gon (Wikipedia)

There are also many attractions around Sai Gon within walking distance such as Notre Dame Cathedral in Ho Chi Minh, Reunification Palace, War Remnants Museum, Bitexco Tower and Sky Deck. For eating-outs, Sai Gon is famous for Pho noodles, Banh Xeo (Crispy pancake), Banh Mi (French baguette), Com Tam (Broken rice), Goi Cuon (Vietnamese spring rolls), Hu Tieu (Rice noodles) and Bun Thit Nuong (Vermicelli noodles with grilled pork). (Vietnam Guide).

3.3.6 Mekong Delta

Mekong Delta is located in South-western Vietnam, covering 39,000 square kilometers it is the third biggest delta in the world. It is well-known for floating markets and water travelling life, including provinces: An Giang, Ben Tre, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Can Tho, Dong Thap, Hau Giang, Kien Giang, Long An, Soc Trang, Tien Giang, Tra Vinh and Vinh Long. Mekong Delta is famous for its biggest rice-growing region, also products from coconut, sugar cane, fruit, and fish. Each province has their own distinct focus and specialties: Cao Lanh is a perfect place for bird enthusiasts, Ha Tien is a remote town surrounded by Khmer villages, Ben Tre is considered as a “coconut island”, while Vinh Long is an ideal location for fishing and fruits growing due to its rich fertile soil and

Ninh Kieu floating market, where local people bargain tropical agriculture products on boats in Can Tho will certainly impress visitors. (Rough guides).



Figure 15: The Mekong Delta (Vietnamvisa)

In 2012, the Mekong Delta in Vietnam was chosen by Lonely Planet as one of the top ten valuable destinations. With the aim to increase the number of tourists in 2015-2020, tourism sector in provinces and cities are focusing on Mekong Delta Tourism Development Plan until 2020. In this plan, Delta's tourism sector will be divided into small groups. The central group including Can Tho, An Giang, Kien Giang and Hau Giang will offer tourists with river tours, business tours, festival tours and high-grade resort tours. Ca Mau, Bac Lieu, Soc Trang – the southernmost area will offer eco tours to salt-marsh forests, cultural and festival tours related to Khemer culture a minority group in Soc Trang. The eastern coastal group including Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Vinh Long and Tra Binh will offer river tours, orchard tours, home-stay tours, craft village tours and those to historical and revolutionary sites. Dong Thap and Long An will provide eco tours to flooded forests. By creating typical products in different areas in Mekong Delta will help to attract more visitors and tourists to the region. The Mekong is not only famous for its girls with the voice as sweet as honey and charming smiles but also distinct local people who are very warm, friendly and sincere. (Vietnam Tourism).

3.4 Awareness

Vietnamese people are generally friendly, warm-hearted and easy-going and their way of life is strongly influenced by Confucianism that they highly regard “benevolence, propriety, loyalty, intellect and trustworthiness”. They have close-knit relationships with family, friends, relatives and co-workers, there is a saying in Vietnam that “next-door neighbours are much more important than distant relatives”. Vietnamese people are also very modest, they don’t accept praise from the others easily and sometimes pass it to the other’s person (Vietnamtourism). Vietnamese people in the past have been through tremendous wars with Chinese, French, briefly Japanese people and then with Americans remarkably in “Vietnam War” as we know it or “American War” as they call it. Vietnam War has deep rooted in the mind of Vietnamese people, the division of the North and South Vietnam especially in the generation of the 40 or 50’s. Nowadays, young people less than 25 years old made up of over 50 percent of Vietnam’s population (factsanddetails). These young, dynamic, well-educated, ambitious and international people are the striven force of Vietnam economy and development. The Youth of Vietnam are more likely to focus on cultivating their knowledge, skills and following their life passion than discussing politics or being influenced by wars in the past.

Awareness is one of the five A’s in the framework in building a successful destination, it is an image that visitors have about the place before coming to Vietnam or after visiting the destination. It is one of the most important factors that keep the image attractive and returning of tourists. Three focused points are measured in this area are the friendliness and positive attitude of local residents and the front line of tourism in hotels, bars, restaurants, shops, ticket office dealing directly with customers towards tourists; market awareness linked with perceived image Finnish tourists have about Vietnam, it has strongly influenced Finnish tourists in travelling decision making process. (Tourism Western Australia, 2009).

3.5 Functional characteristics of Vietnam tourism

In this chapter, I would like to present some of the dominant and selected features of Vietnam to be surveyed in this paper according to the attributes used by researchers to measure Destination Image. Here are the following subchapters which will be presented in this chapter: Scenery, Price Levels, Nightlife, Wilderness Activities, Transportation, Architecture, Historic Sites, Beaches and Food.

3.5.1 Scenery/Natural Attractions

Sapa located in the Northwest mountain of Vietnam close to the border of China have charmed people all over the world for its natural and picturesque views of the city. Many visitors come here to experience the life of Vietnamese ethnic groups living within their culture, a prime traditional way of life, making living from selling souvenirs and market exchange. In Sapa, tourists can simply walk, ride motorbikes or go for group trekking along the field paths to discover beautiful green rice terraced fields, mountains, valleys, waterfalls and to learn about local H'mong and Dzao mountain tribes.



Figure 16: Sapa (Crossingtravel)

Sapa is also well-known for Love Market and it is held every Sunday for people to buy and sell food, products. This is also a place where boys and girls can meet together on Saturday night to find their lovers and after playing some games, knowing each other well, they can become life mates of each other.

3.5.2 Cost/price level

Vietnam is one of the cheapest place to travel in Southeast Asia, the costs of travelling in Vietnam are lower than those in Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar and Indonesia. Here are an example of daily travelling costs in Southeast Asia in US Dollar according to my-funkytravel.com

\$20/day: Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam

\$25/day: Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar

\$30/day: The Philippines

\$45/day: Singapore

(Costs quoted in August 2015)

Here are the prices of travelling in Vietnam by myfunkytravel:

“Hue to Hanoi by Train (13-14 hours) - \$25-35 (air-con berth on sleeper train)

0.5 litre domestic beer in Ho Chi Minh City bar/restaurant - \$1

Meal at cheap restaurant - \$2-3

Cheap dorm bed in a big city – from \$3

Budget double/twin private room – from \$8

Full day kayaking trip around Ha Long Bay - \$25-30”

US Dollars are commonly quoted as prices in many tourist gathering places such as bars, restaurants, museums, accommodation, Ben Thanh Market or when purchasing tourist packages. Tourists can withdraw US Dollar in ATM machines.

The costs of travelling in Vietnam depend on accommodation type that tourists stay, for example, prices of hotels, hostels or motels vary significantly; it also depends on dining places and food preferences, for example, street foods are usually cheap at \$1 or \$2, fine-dining restaurants are more expensive, Western food prices more than local food. Therefore, how much budgets travellers are willing to spend and how much services they demand will determine the costs of traveling in Vietnam.

Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) hotel prices	
Rating	Price (USD)
    	7.00 - 25.00
    	9.00 - 40.00
    	18.00 - 73.00
    	38.00 - 170.00
    	65.00 - 280.00

Figure 17: Hotel prices in Ho Chi Minh City (Priceoftravel)

In some places of shopping, there are not many products quoted in price in advance, we have a tradition of bargaining between buyers and sellers. The best tips for it are to joke about the price instead of being stressed out and to stick to the original price as buyers would want to pay. Therefore, “Walk out” technique used in several times to show that buyers will walk away as no longer interested in the price will definitely win the bargaining price.

1 EUR = 24,260.09 VND (xe)

3.5.3 Climate

Compared to the rest of the world, Vietnam has a tropical climate and the weather changes significantly from the North to the South which is influenced by latitude differences across regions, topographical landscapes, and adjacent of the East to the South China Sea.

There are four distinct seasons in the North – Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. The weather is cooler in the winter time with an average temperature at 5 – 6 Celsius and below zero Celsius in mountainous areas in Sapa and the summer time weather can reach to 35 Celsius. The raining season starts in August, October and November with heavy rainfalls while February and March occur light rains. (Guide Vietnam).

In Central Vietnam, the climate remains comparatively dry and hot all year round. In the middle of the year, the weather is warmer and humid while it becomes cooler from November to April. Flooding happens from October to December. (Guide Vietnam)

There are three distinct seasons in the South: hot and dry weather in March – June, raining season in June – November. The average temperature is 25 – 30 Celsius throughout the year, the best time to visit Ho Chi Minh City is in December - February when the weather can drop down to 20 Celsius in the evening (Wiki Voyage).

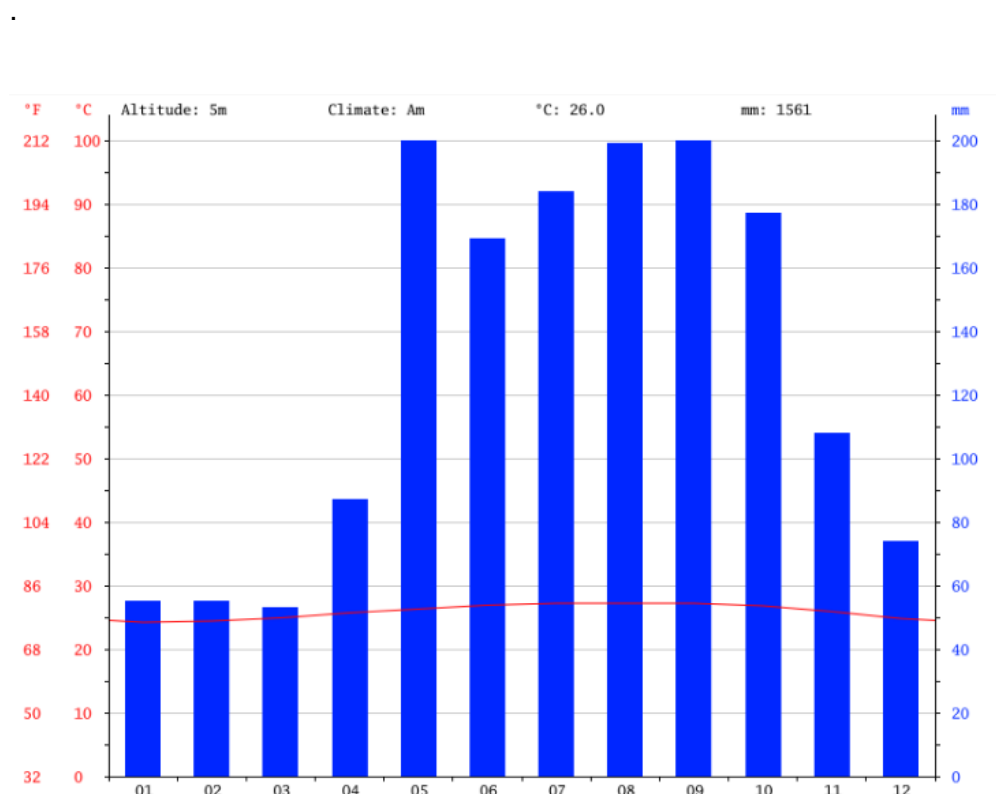


Figure 18: Average Temperatures and Rainfalls of Vietnam (Climate-data)

The graph indicates average temperatures and rainfalls in Vietnam across regions of the country. The average temperature of Vietnam is 26 Celsius with average rainfalls at 1561 mm. Driest season is from January to March and raining season is from May until October in which May reaches the highest rainfalls at 200mm. (Climate Data).

There are always things to see and do in Vietnam no matter which time of the year for tourists and travellers.

3.5.4 Nightlife and Entertainment

Vietnam with its population estimated by Wikipedia at 92.7 million people consisting of over half population of people younger than 25 has brought the country into an active and vibrant mode. The atmosphere could be seen in big cities - Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Da Nang, Nha Trang and Hoi An with full of locals and tourist gatherings.

In Ho Chi Minh City, activities at night vary from district to district where district 1, 7, 3, 5 and 10 featured with various pubs, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, shopping areas, live music, coffee shops and eat street markets.



Figure 19: Saigon Nightlife (City Pass Guide)

Spending an evening in Ho Chi Minh City would not be complete without visiting foreign packed areas on Pham Ngu Lao Street as some cups of Beer Hoi and meeting new people would bring most of the night out. Ben Thanh Market is another way to fill the nights with Vietnamese cultural food markets and to fully immerse in the local lifestyle. Tourists can find many good products and traditional hand-made crafts as gifts for friends. It is important to bear in mind that bargaining has become a way of life in Vietnam. Saigon Street Coffee in Notre Dame Cathedral in the evening is filled with young people gatherings for cups of ice tea, sing-along guitar performances or just for the companionship of this local lifestyle. Many things are happening around the corner in Ho Chi Minh City from dawn to dusk and throughout the night. Tourists can choose

and experience within their budget, time and personal preferences and there are always something for everyone to enjoy to discover the Saigonese life. (Vietnam Guide).

Hanoi lifestyle is somewhat similar to Ho Chi Minh City with features of restaurants, clubs, bars, food streets and nightlife atmospheres, found in most major districts such as Ba Dinh district, Hoan Kiem district...Visitors can spend their night time at Water Puppet show or the beautiful Hanoi Opera House. Water Puppet is a traditional and cultural show in Thang Long Water Puppet Theatre. It tells folks and ways of life of Vietnamese people by using tradition music and the artists control the puppets behind bamboo curtains. It is a unique and traditional show in Hanoi and it has been widespread all over the world.



Figure 20: Hanoi Water Puppet Show (Indochina Voyages)

The Hanoi Opera House has the biggest capacity in Vietnam to hold seats for 600 audience, interior design is aesthetically appealing and deep rooted by French influence in the ruling year 1911. It is definitely a great place to spend the night out with a high-class piece of operatic and romantic music or just simply walk-in to contemplate the atmosphere of this historic and wonderful House. (Vietnam Guide).

3.5.5 National Parks/Wilderness Activities

Oxalis Adventure Tours provide adventurous tours for tourists in the area of Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park. It is carefully monitored by British Caving Research Associa-

tion, only a limited number of participants are allowed to join the tour each time to ensure tour quality and sustainable tourism development. Oxalis organize various tours in many conditions for example swimming underground in river caves, long distance trekking, spending a night in the jungle or seeking for thirst in an adventure.



Figure 21: Son Doong Expedition Tour (Oxalis)

Son Doong Cave located in Quang Binh province in the Central of Vietnam is the biggest cave in the world. It was first discovered by Ho Khanh in 1991 but not until 2009 that Ho Khanh together with a group of British explorers came to discover and study the cave. Nowadays, the cave has been opened for tourists for tour expedition under certain fitness requirements and only a limited number of tourists can join the tour each year. Oxalis is the only licensed company that offers tours to Son Doong Cave under three categories – Expedition Tour, Adventure Tour and Photography Tour.

3.5.6 Local infrastructure/Transportation

Vietnam transportation is on its way of improvement, traffic congestions packed up with motorcycles, buses, cars and other types of vehicles during peak hours have become interesting and exotic scenes for foreigners to capture around major cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. Moving around Vietnam from one city to another city

is now more accessible and available in various ways by plane, train, bus or motor-bikes. To travel within a city, tourists can opt for bus, taxi, motorbike or bicycle...

Plane

It is a quick and time-saving option for tourists who opt to reach a destination in one hour or less, the flight between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City takes two hours as compared to 30 or 40 hours by train. The price of domestic flight ticket is relatively cheap as many airlines compete with each other to keep the price low along with maintaining good quality services. Vietnam Airlines with two hubs at Noi Bai International Airport and Tan Son Nhat International Airport are the major airlines operating both international and domestic flights in Vietnam to 52 destinations in 17 countries (Wikipedia). Jetstar Pacific offering lower airfares than the former one operates frequent flights to Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang and there will be times with flights delayed. Air Mekong based in Phu Quoc is an additional small airline that has flight routes focused in the Southern and Central Highland of Vietnam, it also has connecting flights between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to Phu Quoc and Con Dao Islands. (Vietnam Online).

Train

Travelling by train in Vietnam is an amazing way to discover many beautiful views and to immerse into the local life of Vietnamese people. The Vietnamese Railway System was established by the French colonist in the past century and later reconstructed and continued expand networks by the Vietnamese government in 1975. The Railway System in Vietnam is well-connected with most of the country's provinces, the longest train routes stretching from the North to the South cover the entire country at 2.600 km. The train also reaches borders of Vietnam-China to make its way to the stations of Yunnan and Guangxi (Vietnam Tourism). Travelling by train in Vietnam is a fun and rewarding experience for people who seek adventures and memorable journeys. However, trains in Vietnam are not so fast, modern or in high-quality as those in China, Korean, or Japan. The train goes across the country from Ha Noi to Ho Chi Minh City, most of the trains have air conditioners and there are four types of seats to choose from – hard sear, soft seat, hard sleeper and soft sleeper (North Vietnam).



Figure 22: Seats and berths in Vietnamese trains (Vietnamrailways)

Night trains are organized across the country from Ha Noi to Sapa, Ha Noi to Hue, Ha Noi to Sai Gon, and other provinces of Vietnam, except The Central Highland of Vietnam (Vietnam Tourism). The train takes passengers through various sceneries of Vietnam from mountains, forests, hills, lakes, valleys, waterfalls, oceans to local rice fields, palm trees, water buffalo and villages. It is beautiful and the price is not as expensive as travelling by flights, not only that tourists can also make friends with other travellers and meet local people.

Bus

Travelling by bus is a common and cheapest way to visit the cities. There are two main types of bus - local bus and interprovincial bus. Local buses can be found in Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City and other major tourist destinations – Da Nang, Hoi An, Hue, Nha Trang, Da Lat, Vung Tau...The price for local public buses are at low-costs, some bus routes are equipped with air-conditioners while some others have open windows. Sometimes, buses can be overcrowded and might not have enough seats for all passengers, therefore, it is common to see people standing on the bus, especially during peak hours. (Vietnam Online).

Interprovincial buses stop in major terminals, for example, My Dinh bus station and Giap Bat bus station in Ha Noi, or Mien Tay and Mien Dong bus station in Ho Chi Minh City. There are also other buses driving between major tourist cities. These buses are in high-quality and well-equipped with seats or sleeping seats at good prices. Tourists can buy tickets on the internet, via travel agents, from registered ticket booths or directly from the conductors on the buses. Many bus drivers are not good at speaking English, it is recommend to find the routes before embarking on the bus or to write down the name of the stop on the paper. (Vietnam Online).

Other types of transportation that tourists can take are ferry/boat, motorbikes or cars for rent.

3.5.7 Architecture/ Buildings

Hang Nga Guest House is also known as the “Crazy House”, located in 3 Huynh Thuc Khang, Ward 3, Dalat in an area of 1,600 m² designed by Dang Viet Nga in 1990. The house has been listed in the world top ten’s most creative buildings in the world, according to the Chinese People’s Daily. The House is built with many bizarre and ostentatious shapes in both exterior and interior designs, it not only attracts people’s curiosity to discover the House but also engenders a sense of the thrilling experience of a ghost house. The House is served as a Guest House for visitors to rest a few days throughout the journey in Dalat, and now as well it has become a museum for family, children, and adults to visit.

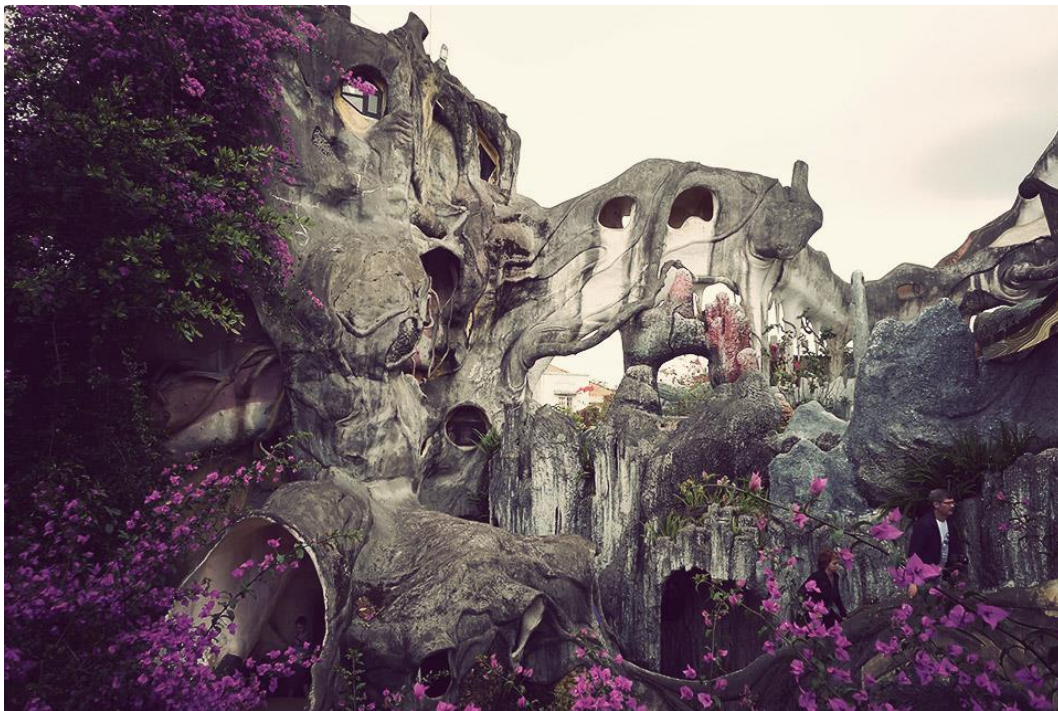


Figure 23: Hang Nga GuestHouse, Dalat City (Gallivant)



Figure 24: The Eagle Room (Gallivant)

There are many rooms with ten themes in the guesthouse, for examples, the tiger room, the eagle room, the ant room, the kangaroo room; each room has its own meaning. Each room has an animal statue in the room centre to feature the room theme and to act as a function of room fireplace. The ticket price to visit the House is VND 20,000, less than a euro. The price for one single room ranges from \$34 -\$47/night while double room ranges from \$47-\$84/night. (Vietnam Online).

3.5.8 Historic sites/Museums

Cu Chi tunnels located 70km northwest of Ho Chi Minh City, it takes 40 minutes from Ho Chi Minh City to reach Cu Chi. The tunnels are 120 kilometers long, it was built by Vietnamese soldiers during the French occupation in the 1940s and most surprisingly the tunnels were built entirely with bare hands and simple tools, until 1960s during the war against American, the tunnels were continuously expanded and better equipped with air ventilation. The tunnels tell stories of Vietnamese army lives living inside the tunnels, they slept, ate, hide enemies and even women gave birth, taught and nourished next generation inside the tunnels. The stories were fascinating, many people sacrificed inside the tunnels and many newborns called this place as home. The tunnels were served as a living space with kitchens, dining rooms, living areas, hospitals,

or used as a military planning rooms with weapon storage facilities, strategy planning rooms and command centers. (Vietnam Guide).



Figure 25: Cu Chi Tunnels Map. (Seaade2016)



Figure 26: Cu Chi Tunnels (Deluxe Group Tours)

There are many tour operators organizing a half day trip from Ho Chi Minh to Cu Chi tunnels for 825,000 VND. Visitors will be introduced a video clip of Vietnam War, how the tunnels were built and how it works. During the trip, they can also try cassava – the food Vietnamese soldier ate in the past – to experience the past life.

3.5.9 Beaches

The Island of Phu Quoc in Kien Giang Province is Vietnam's largest island, it is situated 45 km away from the Gulf of Thailand and 4 km away from Cambodia. The island has a total area of 574 square kilometers and a population of 103,000 people. It has many beautiful and pristine beaches stretching over 150 km of coastlines with tropical weather. There are many beautiful and famous beaches in Phu Quoc, for example, Long Beach, Sao Beach, Fingernail Beach, ect..



Figure 27: Phu Quoc Island (Phu Quoc Island Explorer)

Long Beach is one of the most popular beaches in Phu Quoc, it has a coastline of 20 km stretching along the South-western coast of the island. In the northern end of Long

Beach, there are many tourist infrastructures, for examples, restaurants, hotels, resorts, guesthouse, cafes, and bars, while lower down the southern part of the coastline, there are pearl farms and Phu Quoc fish sauce's industry. (Phu Quoc Travel).



Figure 28: Long Beach, Phu Quoc (Phu Quoc Travel)

Sao Beach located in the Eastern part of the island is an off-the-beaten-track spot. This area is not easy to track down as it is situated in a remote and discreet area, in order to get there, it is advisable to rent a taxi or a motorbike and ask from the locals. (Phu Quoc Travel).



Figure 29: Sao Beach, Phu Quoc (Go Trip)

Fingernail Beach located on Fingernail Island is a part of An Thoi archipelago and it belongs to the Gulf of Thailand. As a secluded island, the only way to get there is to take a boat from An Thoi Town or join a snorkeling/ diving tour from An Thoi port (Phu Quoc Island Guide).



Figure 30: Fingernail Island (Phu Quoc Guide)

It takes 2 hours flight from Ha Noi and 40 minutes flight from Ho Chi Minh City in order to get to Phu Quoc. In 2017, there are direct charter flights open to Phu Quoc from Sweden, Denmark, UK, Russia, China, Thailand and Korea and soon there will be the longest cable car in the world, an 8 km long distance transport carrying passengers from Phu Quoc to An Thoi Town, Hon Thom Island.

Phu Quoc Island offers visa exemption in 30 days for all nationalities for just visiting Phu Quoc Island and no entering to other destinations in Vietnam. In order to entrance Phu Quoc, tourists must have a passport valid for more than 6 months and to be able to show their round trip ticket of travelling to Phu Quoc (Phu Quoc Island Guide). It is a good new that tourists can come to visit the Island at any time of the year and the weather is warm enough to swim throughout the year; however, it will be rainy from June and September in Phu Quoc Island.

3.5.10 Cuisines/ Foods

Vietnam is famous for its diverse and delicious cuisines across the country. Visitors are charmed and captivated by a wide range of Vietnamese tasty foods, for example, Pho, Bun Bo Hue, Banh Xeo, Com Suon, Bun Cha, Goi Cuon and Banh Mi.

Vietnamese food culture is based hugely on the white of rice and the green of fresh vegetables and herbs, two main basic ingredients have made Vietnamese food to become one of the healthiest cuisines in the world.



Figure 31: Pho (Hanoi Kids)

Pho is a traditional dish that can be found in every corner of food stalls throughout Vietnam. Everyone in Vietnam loves Pho, It is usually served as breakfast, lunch or dinner. Pho is made of flat rice noodles cooked with beef and many other herbs. The broth of Pho is made from simmering beef bones and lesser quality meat from pork or chicken for hours to produce quality soup broth. Other ingredients for a bowl of Pho are onion, ginger, star anise, cinnamon stick, black cardamom, sprouts and some slices of well-cut beef put on top. When serves, the sour of lime will be well-combined with the sweet of meat broth making the dish very tasty, deep, rich and addictive to eat. (Hanoi Kids).

According to a survey implemented by Kantar TNS with commissioner from MATKA Nordic Travel Fair, around 30 percent of Finnish people preferred to travel abroad for food reason and 35 percent of Finns recommended to others delicious food abroad in

their travelling. This information has given an important aspect of Finns travelling to other countries. (Gianfranco Nitti, 2017).

4 Methodology

This chapter will explain quantitative and qualitative research method, questionnaires design and research plan. In addition, validity and reliability will be explored as well in this chapter.

4.1 Research method

The questionnaires in this survey paper are applied to both quantitative and qualitative research method.

Qualitative method used in survey collects information of respondents in the form of words, images and sounds rather than numbers. It helps researchers have an in-depth knowledge, insights into the subject and it produces more exploratory theory for further investigation. *“Qualitative research is conducted through an intense and/or prolonged contact with the field or life situation. These situations are typically “banal” or normal ones, reflective of the everyday life of individuals, groups, societies, organizations. The researcher’s role is to gain a “holistic” overview of the context under study: its logic, its arrangement, and its explicit and implicit rules”.* (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

On the contrary, quantitative research gives results in a statistical form. “The aim of the quantitative research method is to test pre-determined hypothesis and produce generalizable results” (Marshall, p.522). *“It is mainly based on the collection of data, which are then analysed through a variety of statistical techniques. It usually tends to obtain a relatively small amount of information on a large number of respondents or observations”.* (Weaver and Lawton, 2002). The results later are interpreted in the forms of graphs, bars, tables or pie charts. This method applied to theory testing rather than exploratory theory, it will test how many people have approved or have chosen a given specific answer. This method is restricted in a way that all answers are set into a frame and respondents are required to choose within the given options. While qualitative method provides more opportunities for respondents to freely express and give ideas in their own words, quantitative method is built from the researcher’s framework and’s ideas. However, quantitative method is ideal for obtaining little information on a large amount of people,

for example 200 respondents; qualitative method collects relatively elaborated information in a limited cases. (A.J Veal, 2011)

Quantitative method is majorly applied in my survey. The reasons I choose to use this method are to obtain a general information of how Finnish people think about Vietnam as a travel destination, to generate Finnish background information in statistical orders, to avoid confusions or possibilities of respondents from neglecting the questionnaires and to avoid taking too much time from respondents. Since Vietnam is a growing tourism emergence besides Thailand, some questionnaires are designed in an overall information or feeling of Vietnam in order to collect basic information of Finnish people have about Vietnam. Qualitative questionnaires are asked in several questions regarding to how Finnish people feel or think about the country when they are mentioned about Vietnam or suggestions they would give to Vietnam to promote their tourism attractiveness. A few questions in using open-ended questions helps to give this research more detailed information, to see respondents in a more personal way and give the research more exploratory aspects to further studies.

4.2 Questionnaires design

The questionnaires are divided into three parts. The first part of the survey is targeted to Finns who have travelling experiences in Vietnam, the second part is for Finns in general regardless of whether they have made their trip and the last part are background information of respondents.

In the first part, interviewees will give information about the number of times they visited Vietnam, their travelling experience and the trip purpose.

The second part of the questionnaires consisting of six questions to be answered by both groups – people who have been to and have not been to Vietnam. In this section, they will be asked to rate the important levels of attributes listed ranging from functional characteristics to psychological characteristics commonly used by researchers, such as nature, price levels, climate, nightlife/entertainment, wilderness activities, transportation, buildings, museums, beaches, food, accessibility, friendliness of the local, hospitality of service staffs, safety and visa information. This structured methodology of question provides information from respondents on a more general and common view that Finnish people have about Vietnam.

The likert type scales on agreement are also applied to ask respondents to rate the level of their agreement in several statement about Vietnam. Several statements are relatively repeated to some attributes asked in previous questions, and it is one of the purposes of the survey to test reliability of the results. There is also one question about the reasons of their trip to Vietnam which are set as multiple applied to the answers.

The next questionnaire is given as an open-ended question, the respondents are forced to think about the impression or images they have about Vietnam. An unstructured methodology in this question will give respondents opportunities to freely express on their own words and provides research a more holistic approach in measuring Vietnam image as a tourism destination.

The last two questions with open-ended questions approach designed to ask respondents to recommend some suggestions to make Vietnam as a more attractive tourism destination, and whether they would like to travel to the country in the future, followed by giving an explanation to it. Answers to these questions help give information of how Finnish people would see Vietnam as a tourism destination to improve and whether they are willing to visit or come back to Vietnam again.

The last part of the survey is about background information of the respondents including gender, age, occupation and marital status.

In my survey, specific tourist destinations are not mentioned to avoid respondents' unfamiliarity, therefore, survey is kept in generic approach to get more questions answered as possible.

4.3 Research Plan

The survey in the form of English will be distributed on the internet and on the street. On the internet, Facebook will be the main channel to collect data of Finnish respondents and the questionnaires are published on "Vietnamin ystävät" Facebook page. LinkedIn is also a platform to be used for data collection. Street survey will be carried out in Helsinki parks of Esplanadi, Vanha kirkkopuisto, Johanneksenpuisto, ect... The sample for this survey has an aim of 80 respondents. The questionnaires are created

by using Webropol online survey tool and later the results will be analysed through Webropol.

The survey was conducted in May 2017, respondents of the survey are 83 answers (45 answers from the streets and 38 answers from the internet). In general, people are very willing to answer the survey, the majority of people know well where Vietnam is, yet some younger people have vague knowledge about Vietnam's culture and what it offers to tourists. Older people found open-ended questions of number 7, 8, 9 hard to answer since they haven't been to Vietnam, therefore, some of them left the questions unanswered. The problem that I faced in the street survey is that some older people hesitated to answer survey in English and not many of them are willing to fill the survey of some pages.

4.4 Reliability and validity

"Reliability is the extent to which research findings would be the same if the research were to be repeated at a later date or with a different sample of subjects." (A.J Veal, 1992, P.46)

Reliability is about having the same results when a research is being measured again in a later stage or a different sample being used to measure the same subject. In social sciences, the results frequently change due to constant movements of human's behaviour and social attitudes. Therefore, researches in leisure and tourism are different to natural sciences and it belongs to the group of social sciences. Reliability of the result is based on right measuring conditions and a big number of participants being researched. An individual responses the questions correctly, however, the results of the whole study might be changes due to differences in people's opinion. The changes are based on a huge amount of participants with similar responses. (A.J Veal, 1992, P.46)

Validity is about the information received from the research truly reflects the phenomena that being studied. There are difficulties in measuring the truthfulness of the results towards the research questions as responses are based on participants' feelings, behaviour and their attitudes. For example, measuring the level of participants' engagement to badminton can be varied greatly from people to people. Some people attend the sport for five hours per week while some others accidentally become participants in a short moment of interest for a few minutes. Therefore, researches in leisure and tourism are rarely regarded as natural sciences. (A.J Veal, 1992, P.46)

It is important to measure both validity and reliability in the research paper. In one paper, there shouldn't be just only validity or reliability when carrying the research.

5 Data analysis and findings

This chapter will analyse the results of the research one by one and give better insights to the research studies. In total, there are 83 respondents participating in this studies, with 36 male participants and 47 female participants.

5.1 Background information

The target group of the survey is for Finnish people, where there are 76 respondents with roots of Finnish and seven answers from other nationalities, including Australia, Poland, the US, Brazil and Sweden. The reason that there are non-Finnish respondents are because it was difficult for the interviewer to identify whether the interviewees are from Finland.

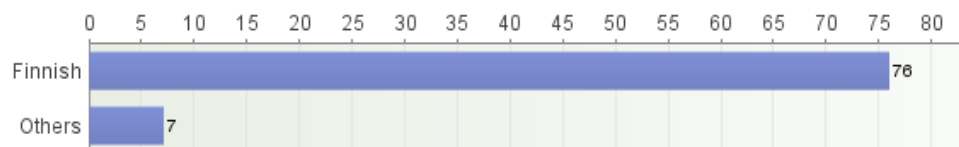


Figure 32. Nationalities of respondents (n=83)

The respondents are classified into five age groups: under 18, 18 – 24 years old, 25 – 45 years old, 46 – 64 years old, and 65 years old and over. Apparently, the major group of the respondents in this survey belongs to group 18 - 24 years old with 41 answers (49.4%), followed by that is group 25 - 45 years old with 23 answers (27.71%). People under 18 and over 65 years old have the least answers with only six and three participants of each group.

Since the survey is presented in English to Finnish people, it can create language barrier to the respondents, especially for those people in the age group of more than 45

years old. According to a survey from Statista (2015), people from 15 - 24 years old accounted for 90% of Facebook users in Finland in total of respondents in this age group, those from 25 - 34 years old - 80%, those from 35 – 44 years old -73%, and those above 55 years old the percentages reached under 50% (statista, 2015), therefore it's not accessible for people more than 65 years old to answer on Facebook. There is only 3.61% in the age group of over 65 years answering in the survey. Therefore, most of the respondents are students and employed people at 31.33% and 48.19% respectively. Unemployed and retired people have taken smaller part in this survey.

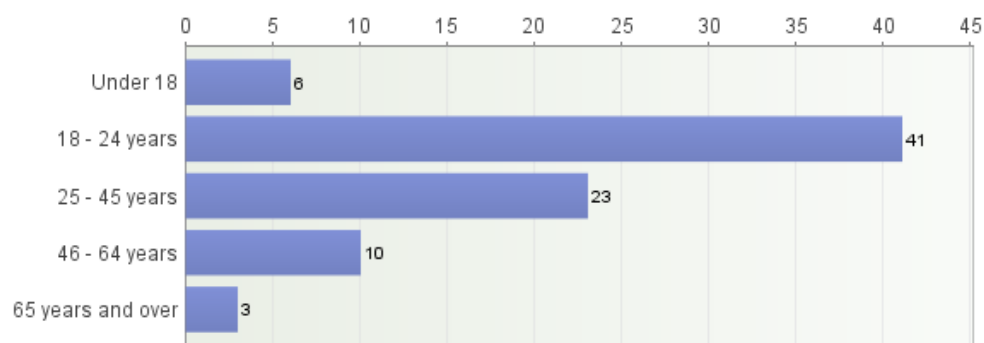


Figure 33. Age distribution of respondents (n=83)

In the marital status sector, over half of the respondents are still single while more than one third of the respondents are in a relationship, and only 13.25% of those are married.

5.2 Results from respondents of whether they have been to Vietnam

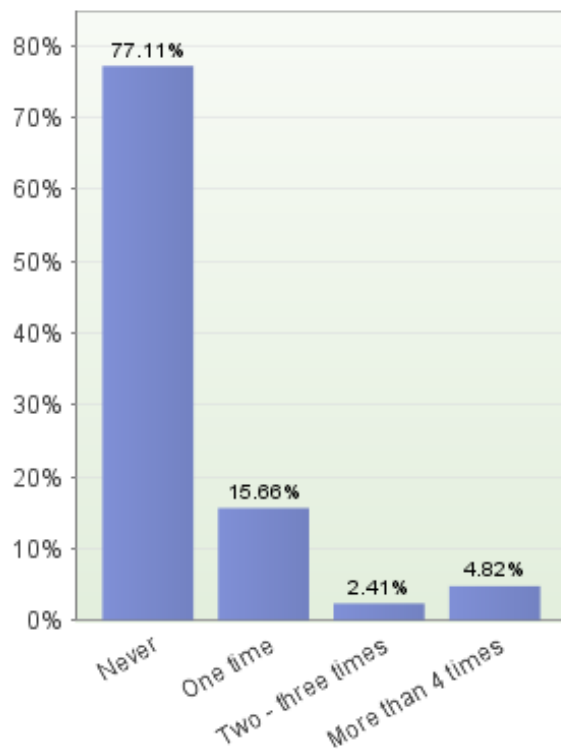


Figure 34. Percentages of people have been to Vietnam according to the number of times

A majority of people answered in this survey haven't been to Vietnam before (77.11%), only 15.66% of people have been there only for the first time, 2.41% of people were there two – three times and almost 5% of the respondents visited Vietnam for more than 4 times.

5.3 Reasons of travelling to Vietnam

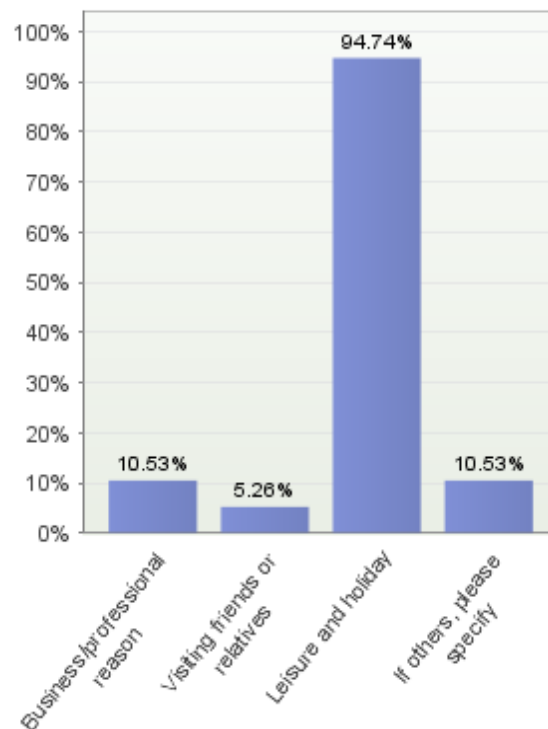


Figure 35. Purpose of the trip to Vietnam (n=19)

There are 19 respondents out of 83 people have been to Vietnam. And 18 people went there for leisure and holiday purpose. Most of the Finnish people (17) traveled to Vietnam for leisure and holiday purpose, only two people came there for business reason, other reasons travelling to Vietnam are visiting friends, volunteering and backpacking with each of one respondents. Vietnamese are well-known for its friendliness to foreigners, since we live in a warmer climate and community places a big part in our society.

5.4 Travelling experience in Vietnam from respondents who have been to Vietnam

People who have been to Vietnam reported positively about their travelling experience. Brief descriptions of respondents' answers released that Finnish generally very enjoyed their trips to Vietnam, especially the food, culture, people, weather, good prices and

great atmosphere. The middle part of Vietnam was mentioned as one of the best place to visit in Vietnam, and was preferred to as “heaven” to one respondent. Another respondent praised the quality and services of the hotel rooms which were better than other countries in comparison to the price. However, the survey also revealed that travelling from one place to another place in Vietnam are “tedious”. This fact could be due to that transportation in Vietnam is not so developed compared to other developed countries, for example buses in Vietnam are still very crowded, air-condition and air-ventilation are not well equipped. Other than that, Finnish respondents in this survey have very positive experience about their trips in Vietnam.

5.5 Results from respondents of their motivations to visit Vietnam

The chart below shows that a significant majority of Finnish people are drawn to visit Vietnam for the warm weather (79.52%) with 66 answers and beautiful landscape at approximately three-quarter with 64 answers. Followed by that are the exquisite Vietnamese cuisines reached at nearly 60%, affordability and friendliness of Vietnamese people both at around 40% that bring 41 and 34 answers of each respectively. Unspoiled beaches was also a reason that many people think of when travelling to Vietnam (33%). However, social media and online marketing about Vietnam tourism was not commonly reached by many Finnish people. Therefore, tourism companies should make more efforts to bring Vietnam tourism visible in online marketing and social media.

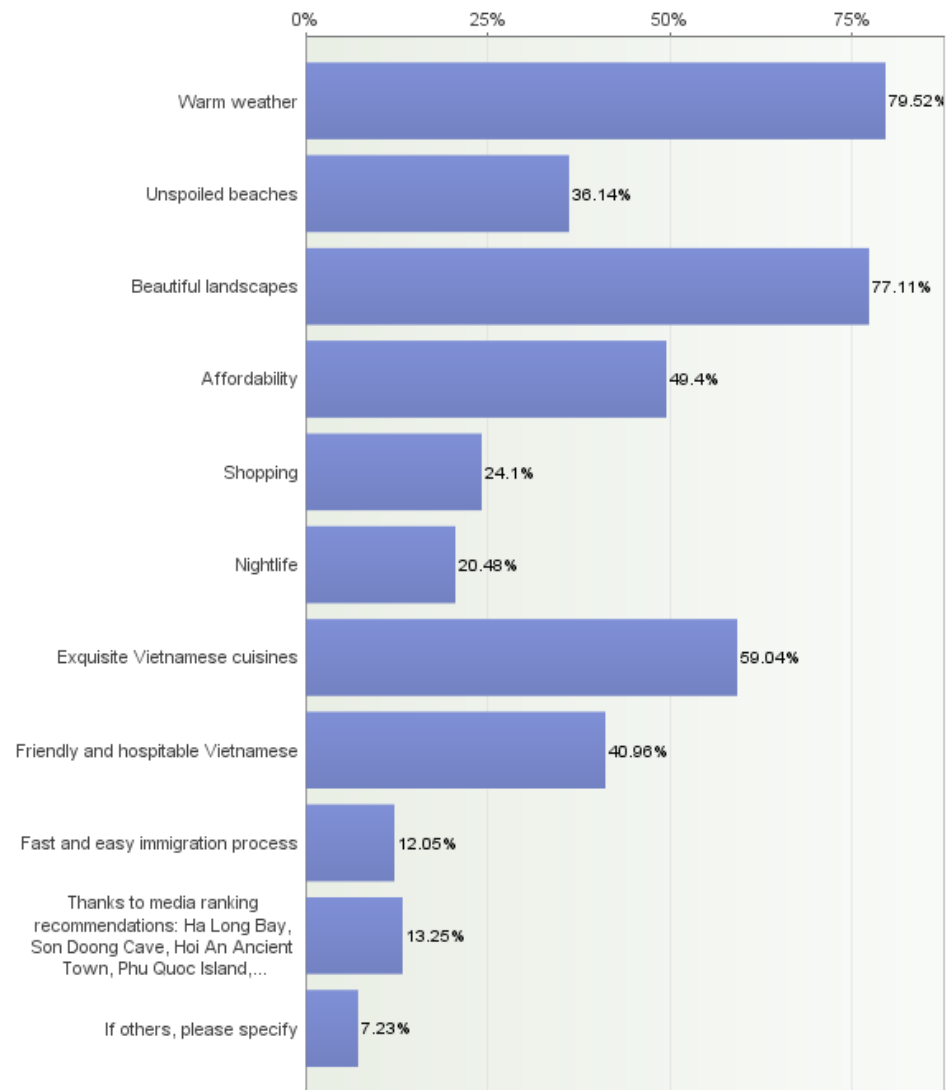


Figure 36. The opinions of the respondents about their motivations to Vietnam

5.6 Results from the respondents rating about the importance of the factors

The table illustrates the level of importance regarding to the listed factors when Finnish people considered about travelling to Vietnam. The scale in this question is as following: Not at all important, slightly important, important, very important and no opinion. In the table, it gives information that nature and cuisine/food were highly regarded as the main attractions when Finnish people considered travelling to Vietnam. These two factors were rated with more than half of the whole respondents as very important (59.21% and 56.41%). Coming after that are climate and accessibility gained respectively 36.71% and 36.14%. In addition, friendliness of the locals and service staffs are also highly rated as importance when Finns travel to Vietnam.

Table 1. Rating of the importance of the following factors

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	No opinion	Total
Nature	2.63%	5.26%	31.58%	59.21%	1.32%	76
Cost/Price levels	2.44%	20.73%	48.78%	26.83%	1.22%	82
Climate	5.06%	12.66%	43.04%	36.71%	2.53%	79
Nightlife and Entertainment	16.46%	48.1%	27.85%	6.33%	1.27%	79
Wilderness activities	11.25%	27.5%	43.75%	15%	2.5%	80
Public Transportation	6.17%	33.33%	43.21%	16.05%	1.23%	81
Architecture/Buildings	6.49%	45.45%	31.17%	14.29%	2.6%	77
Historic sites/Museums	6.1%	43.9%	26.83%	20.73%	2.44%	82
Beaches	7.41%	22.22%	37.04%	32.1%	1.23%	81
Cuisine/Food	2.56%	6.41%	32.05%	56.41%	2.56%	78
Accessibility (Flights between Finland and Vietnam)	4.82%	19.28%	32.53%	36.14%	7.23%	83
Friendliness of the locals	4.94%	9.88%	50.62%	33.33%	1.23%	81
Hospitality of service staffs	3.8%	16.46%	48.1%	30.38%	1.27%	79
Safety	3.61%	8.43%	48.19%	34.94%	4.82%	83
Visa exemption in 15 days for travelling	4.94%	19.75%	40.74%	16.05%	18.52%	81
Total	5.91%	22.63%	39.1%	28.87%	3.49%	1202

It is interesting to note that many Finnish people rated nightlife/entertainment, architecture/buildings and museum as slightly important.

5.7 Results from respondents about the level of agreement to the statements

Many Finns agreed that Vietnam is a good place to spend money for travelling, and the country also offers a lots of interesting activities for tourists. Good cuisines, nice beaches and friendly people are also what attract tourists to come there. Still, there are 27 people out of 81 answers have neutral opinion about the safety in Vietnam, even though there are over 80% of people agreed that safety is an important issue when they travel to Vietnam. As a result of that, a majority of Finnish people preferred travelling to Vietnam with friends and family rather than travelling on their own. It is also a sign that Vietnam tourism should be marketed as a safer country and promote country security for travellers.

5.8 Images and characteristics of Vietnam from the views of Finnish tourists

This question requires respondents to list out some ideas when they think about Vietnam as travel destination. There are many positive views about Vietnam image as a tourist destination. Some most prominent opinions are the food, nature, friendly people, warm climate and beautiful landscapes. Some other things that bothers respondents are traffic jams, high charging price to foreigners and the issue of safety when travelling there. Some other images that link the image of Vietnam to travellers are the floating market, Hoi An, Ha Long Bay, Non La and Vietnam War.

cultures. There are only a few respondents who are tied to their works and financial issues that are unable to visit there.

6 Conclusions

In conclusion, people who have been to Vietnam have very positive images about the country, especially warm climate, nature, food, beaches and services in low prices. It is noticeable that many Finns have recognized Vietnam with the symbol of “Non La” and Ha Long Bay – UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is also suggested that marketing and advertisement campaigns should be well-placed on social media to make Vietnam as a more attracting tourism destination – more information about the culture, people and cuisines. There are also many Finns afraid of travelling alone to Vietnam due to safety issue, while senior group of Finnish are more hesitant to travel in far distance to Vietnam. There have been some injuries and accidents occurred leading to tourist deaths in Vietnam. The reasons are due to the lead of unauthorised guides, street crimes, deadly roads and still Vietnam have many areas are remote and not well-developed. It is suggested that Vietnam authorities can establish a tourism police force with good English speaking skills on some main touristy streets to ensure tourists safety and inquiries. National tourism hotline well-trained with English speaking skills could be established to help tourists with immediate requests and assistance. Travel safety tips and safety guides should also be distributed to tourists to let them be prepared for what they could expect in a new country, as well to avoid endangered places. Vietnam tourism marketers and governments should make plans and initiatives to turn Vietnam into a more desirable destination for solo Finnish travellers and group tourists.

In the future, more researches about Vietnam destination image from Finnish’s perspectives should be carried out, because in the field of leisure and tourism, people’s opinions often shifted constantly and the world is non-stop developing, including ideas, perspectives, preferences and trends. Therefore, more researches in this area should be implemented to adapt Finnish customers’ demands in Vietnam tourism market.

References

A.J. Veal. (2011). Research methods for leisure & Tourism. Fourth edn. Pearson Education, p.125

Buhalis Dimitrios, 2000. Marketing the Competitive Destination of the Future. URL: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.500.88&rep=rep1&type=pdf> Accessed: 28.02.2017

Charlotte M. Echtner and J.R. Brent Ritchie. The Journal of Tourism Studies, Vol. 14, No 1. May 03.

City Pass Guide. Saigon Nightlife. URL: <https://www.citypassguide.com/en/travel/ho-chi-minh-city/drink/blog/saigon-nightlife-the-best-bars-and-clubs> Accessed: 6.3.2017

Climate Data. Climate – Vietnam. URL: <https://en.climate-data.org/location/789736/>. Accessed: 5.3.2017

Cohen, Erik, Toward a Sociology of International Tourism, Social Research. URL: <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/s/shawg/courses/182/articles/cohen/cohen.pdf> Accessed: 2.2.2017

Deluxe Group Tours. Cu Chi Tunnels. URL: <http://www.deluxegrouptours.vn/travel/cu-chi-tunnels-tour-half-day/> Accessed: 12.3.2017

Echtner, C.M. and Brent Ritchie, J.R. (2003). The Meaning and Measurement of Destination Image.

The Journal of Tourism Studies. 14(1), pp.37-48 ed. Pearson Education. Harlow. Facts and Details. Young People in Vietnam. URL: http://factsanddetails.com/south-east-asia/Vietnam/sub5_9c/entry-3393.html Accessed: 1.3.2017

Finnair. Flights to Vietnam. URL: <https://www.finnair.com/ca/gb/destinations/asia-pacific/vietnam> Accessed: 28.02.2017

Frochot, I. and Legohere, L. (2007). Le Marketing du tourisme. Paris: Dunod

Gallivant. Hang Nga GuestHouse. URL: <http://gallivant.com/stay/hang-nga-guesthouse/>
Accessed: 12.3.2017

Gartner, W. C. (1993) Image Formation Process. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*. 2. 191-215.

Ghuri, P. & Grønhaug, K. 2010. *Research Methods in Business Studies*. 4th
Gianfranco Nitti, January 2017. "Thriving" opportunities for Finnish tourism in Italy.
URL: <http://www.italianinsider.it/?q=node/4913> Accessed: 1.4.2017

Go Trip. Sao Beach – Phu Quoc. URL: <http://gotrip.vn/blog/du-lich-bai-sao-phu-quoc-co-gi-hap-dan/> Accessed: 13.3.2017

Guide Vietnam. Vietnam Weather – Climate. URL: <http://www.guidevietnam.com/travel/weather.html> Accessed: 5.3.2017

Hanoi Kids. Pho - The essence of Vietnamese Cuisine. URL: <http://hanoikids.org/pho-the-essence-of-vietnamese-cuisine/> Accessed: 12.3.2017

Indochina Voyages. Enjoy The Water Puppet Show in Hanoi Day Tour. URL:
<http://www.indochinavoyages.com/enjoy-water-puppet-show-hanoi-day-tour/> Accessed:
6.3.2017

Kotler, P and Gertner, D (2004). Country as Brand, Product and Beyond: A Place Marketing and Brand Management Perspective. In Morgan, N., Pritchard, A. and Pride, R. (2002). *Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier. URL: https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/bitstream/handle/10012/4600/Banyai_Maria.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y Accessed: 10.09.2016

Lonely Planet. Introducing to Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park. Accessed:
25.6.2016 URL: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/vietnam/north-central-vietnam/phong-nha-cave/introduction>

MacCannell. D (1989). *The tourists*. New York: Schocken Books

Madrigal, R and Kahle, L.R. (1994). Predicting Vacation Activity Preferences on the Basis of Value-system Segmentation. *Journal of Travel Research* 32 (3), pp 22-28.

Mahmood Khan, Michael Olsen and Turgut Var (1993) "VNR's Encyclopedia of Hospitality Tourism – Push and Pull Model of Tourism Motivations" Motivation of Pleasure Travel and Tourism, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, pp 798-810

Marshall, MN 1996, Sampling for Qualitative Research, Oxford University Press, p.522
URL: file:///C:/Users/a1303962/Downloads/qualitative_and_quantitative_research_techniques.pdf Accessed: 19.3.2017

Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M (1994) Qualitative Data Analysis: a Sourcebook of New Methods, 2nd edn, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.

My Funky Travel. Backpacking Budget for Southeast Asia. URL: <http://myfunkytravel.com/southeastasia-backpacking-budget.html> Accessed: 4.3.2017

North Vietnam. Transportation in Vietnam. URL: <http://north-vietnam.com/transportation-vietnam/> Accessed: 8.3.2017

Oxalis. Son Doong Expedition Gallery. URL: <http://oxalis.com.vn/son-doong-expedition-gallery/> Accessed: 6.3.2017

Pearce, P.L (1988). The Ulysses Factor: New York. Springer-Verlag.

Pearce, P.L. (1982). Perceived Changes in Holiday Destinations. Annuals of Tourism Research, 9. 145-164

Phu Quoc Island Explorer. Phu Quoc to Become International Resort Center. URL: <https://phuquocislandexplorer.com/travel-news/phu-quoc-to-become-international-resort-centre-2.html> Accessed: 12.3.2017

Phu Quoc Island Guide. Phu Quoc Island. URL: <http://www.phuquocislandguide.com/> Accessed: 12.3.2017

Phu Quoc Travel. Beaches in Phu Quoc. URL: <https://phuquoctravel.info/category/beaches-in-phu-quoc> Accessed: 13.3.2017

Price of Travel. Sai Gon (Ho Chi Minh City) Prices. URL: <https://www.priceoftravel.com/30/viet-nam/saigon-ho-chi-minh-city-prices> Accessed: 4.3.2017

Project Atlas. International Students in Finland. URL: <http://www.iie.org/Services/Project-Atlas/Finland/International-Students-In-Finland#.WLhM7n0uHm4> Accessed: 2.3.2017

Rough Guides. The MeKong Delta. Accessed: 27.6.2016 URL <http://www.roughguides.com/destinations/asia/vietnam/the-mekong-delta/>

San Martin, H. and del Bosque, I.A. (2008). Exploring the Cognitive-affective Nature of Destination Image and the Role of Psychological Factors in its Formation. *Tourism Management*: 29, 263 – 277

SEAADE 2016. Travel Information. Ho Chi Minh Discovery. URL: <http://se-aade2016.vn/info/travel/> Accessed: 12.3.2017

Son Doong Cave, Overview. URL: <http://www.sondoongcave.org/son-doong-cave-overview.html>

Son Doong Cave. Son Doong Cave – Overview. Accessed: 25.6.2016 URL: <http://www.sondoongcave.org/son-doong-cave-overview.html>

Statista. Share of Facebook users in Finland in 2015, by age group. URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/541890/share-of-facebook-users-by-age-group-in-finland/> Accessed: 7.6.2017

Tourism and Hospitality Studies, Personal, Social and Humanities Education Section, p36. URL: http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/kla/pshe/nss-curriculum/tourism-and-hospitality-studies/Tourism_English_19_June.pdf Accessed: 10.02.2017

Tourism Western Australia 2009. Types of Tourism Business, The 5 A's of Tourism. URL: http://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/jumpstartguide/types_of_tourism_businesses.html Accessed: 1.3.2017

UNESCO, Central Sector of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long – Ha Noi. Accessed: 24.6.2016 URL: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1328>

UNESCO, Vietnam. Accessed: 24.6.2016 URL: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/vn>

Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism. International Visitors to Vietnam in August and 8 months of 2016. URL: <http://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/english/index.php/items/10873> Accessed: 10.09.2016

Vietnam Guide. 10 Best Ho Chi Minh City Dishes. Accessed: 25.6.2016. URL: <http://www.vietnam-guide.com/ho-chi-minh-city/top10/10-best-ho-chi-minh-dishes.htm>

Vietnam Guide. Cu Chi Tunnels. URL: <http://www.vietnam-guide.com/ho-chi-minh-city/cu-chi-tunnels.htm> Accessed: 12.3.2017

Vietnam Guide. Pham Ngu Lao Street in Ho Chi Minh City. Accessed: 25.6.2016 URL: <http://www.vietnam-guide.com/ho-chi-minh-city/pham-ngu-lao.htm>

Vietnam Guide. Top 10 Best Nightlife in Hanoi. URL: <http://www.vietnam-guide.com/hanoi/top10/top10-hanoi-nightlife.htm> Accessed: 6.3.2017

Vietnam Guide. Top 10 Nightlife Experiences in Ho Chi Minh City. URL: <http://www.vietnam-guide.com/ho-chi-minh-city/top10/top10-ho-chi-minh-nightlife.htm> Accessed: 6.3.2017

Vietnam National Administration of Tourism. VNAT Enhance Tourism Promotion in Nordic Countries. URL: <http://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/english/index.php/items/11106> Accessed: 2.3.2017

Vietnam Net. Hoi An, A New Destination for Western Retirees. Accessed: 25.6.2016 URL: <http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/travel/136043/hoi-an--a-new-destination-for-western-retirees.html>

Vietnam Online, Ba Dinh Square. Accessed: 24.6.2016 URL: <http://www.vietnamonline.com/attraction/ba-dinh-square.html>

Vietnam Online, Finnair to Open Representative in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City. Accessed: 24.6.2016 URL: <http://www.vietnamonline.com/news/finnair-to-open-representative-in-hanoi-and-ho-chi-minh-city.html>

Vietnam Online, Saint Joseph Cathedral. Accessed: 24.6.2016 URL: <http://www.vietnamonline.com/attraction/saint-joseph-cathedral.html>

Vietnam Online. Bus in Vietnam. URL: <https://www.vietnamonline.com/transport/bus-in-vietnam.html> Accessed: 8.3.2017

Vietnam Online. Domestic Airlines. URL: <https://www.vietnamonline.com/transport/domestic-airlines.html> Accessed: 7.3.2017

Vietnam Online. Finnair to Open Representative in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City. Accessed: <https://www.vietnamonline.com/news/finnair-to-open-representative-in-hanoi-and-ho-chi-minh-city.html> Accessed: 18.01.2017

Vietnam Online. Hang Nga GuestHouse (Crazy House). URL: <https://www.vietnamonline.com/attraction/hang-nga-guesthouse-crazy-house.html> Accessed: 12.3.2017

Vietnam Railways. URL: <http://www.vietnamrailways.net/> Accessed: 8.3.2017

Vietnam Tourism, Ha Long Bay. Accessed: 24.6.2016 URL: <http://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/english/index.php/items/7943>

Vietnam Tourism, Opportunity to Promote Viet Nam Tourism to the World via Cinema. Accessed: 24.6.2016 URL: <http://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/english/index.php/items/10181>

Vietnam Tourism. Creating Mekong Typical Products. Accessed: 27.6.2016 URL: <http://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/english/index.php/items/4609>

Vietnam Tourism. Railway System. URL: <https://www.vietnamtourism.org.vn/transportation/rail/railway-system/> Accessed: 8.3.2017

Vietnam Visa Cost, 7 Countries Have Been Exempt from Vietnam Visa Since 2015. Accessed: 24.6.2016 URL: <http://vietnamvisacost.org/vietnam-visa-news/7-countries-have-been-exempt-from-vietnam-visa-since-2015.htm>

Vietnam Wiki Travel Spaces. Climate. URL: <https://viet-nam.wikispaces.com/Climate> Accessed: 5.3.2017

Vietnamtourism. Vietnamese People – Friendly and Hospitable. URL: <https://www.vietnamtourism.org.vn/travel-guide/vietnam-overview/vietnamese-people/vietnamese-people-friendly-and-hospitable.html> Accessed: 1.3.2017

Vivutravel. Vietnam Visa. URL: <https://www.vivutravel.com/vietnam-visa-on-arrival> Accessed: 28.02.2017

Weaver, D. and Lawton, L. (2002) Tourism Management. Wiley and Sons, Milton Keynes, UK.

Wiki Travel. Vietnam Travel Map. URL: http://wikitravel.org/en/File:Vietnam_Regions_Map.png Accessed: 7.3.2017

Wiki Voyage. Vietnam Climate. URL: <https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Vietnam> Accessed: 5.3.2017

Wikipedia, Geography of Vietnam. Accessed: 24.6.2016 URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Vietnam

Wikipedia, Vietnam. Accessed: 24.6.2016 URL: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam>

Wikipedia. Ho Chi Minh City. Accessed: 25.6.2016 URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ho_Chi_Minh_City

Wikipedia. Hoi An. Accessed: 25.6.2016 URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%E1%BB%99i_An

Wikipedia. Vietnam Airlines. URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_Airlines Accessed: 7.3.2017

World Travel & Tourism Council. Travel & Tourism, Economic Impact 2015 Vietnam. URL: <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic%20impact%20research/countries%202015/vietnam2015.pdf> Accessed: 2.3.2017

World Travel Guide. Vietnam Visa and Passport Requirements. URL: <http://www.world-travelguide.net/vietnam/passport-visa> Accessed: 10.09.2016

XE, Currency Converter. URL: <http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=EUR&To=VND> Accessed: 4.3.2017

Zhao, C. (2006). New Zealand's Destination Image and the Chinese Outbound Market: A Comparative Study between The Beijing (north) and Guangdong (south) Markets. Thesis (Master). Auckland University of Technology

Appendix 1. Destination Image

1. Have you ever been to Vietnam?

- ☐ Never ☐ One
☐ Two – three times ☐ More than 4 times

(If you have never been to Vietnam, go directly to question number 4.

If you have been to Vietnam, continue with question number 2)

2. What was/were the reason(s) of your travelling to Vietnam?

- ☐ Business/professional reasons ☐ Visiting friends or relatives
☐ Leisure and holiday ☐ If others, please specify.....

3. How do you describe your travelling experience in Vietnam shortly?

.....
.....

4. What are/will be the motivations for you to visit Vietnam? (multiple answers applied)

- ☐ Warm weather ☐ Unspoiled beaches ☐ Beautiful Landscapes
☐ Affordability ☐ Shopping ☐ Nightlife
☐ Exquisite Vietnamese cuisines ☐ Friendly and hospitable Vietnamese
☐ Fast and easy immigration process
☐ Thanks to media ranking recommendations: Ha Long Bay, Son Doong Cave, Hoi An Ancient Town, Phu Quoc Island,....
☐ If others, please specify.....

5. If you go to Vietnam, how important are the factors below for you?

	Not at all important	Slightly Important	Neutral/ In between	Important	Very Important	No opinion
Nature	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cost/Price levels						
Climate						
Nightlife and Entertainment						
Wilderness activities						
Transportation						
Architecture/Buildings						
Historic sites/Museums						
Beaches						
Cuisine/Food						
Accessibility (Flights between Finland and Vietnam)						
Friendliness of the locals						
Hospitality of service staffs						
Safety						
Visa exemption in 15 days for travelling						

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
People in Vietnam are very friendly						
Vietnamese cuisine is appealing						
Vietnam offers nice beaches						

Vietnam offers good value for money for tourists						
Vietnam offers interesting activities for tourists						
Vietnamese cities are interesting for tourists						
I can easily find information on the internet for my trip to Vietnam						
Vietnam is a safe country to travel						
Vietnam is a popular tourism destination nowadays						
I prefer travelling in a small group with my friends/family to Vietnam						
I prefer travelling on my own to Vietnam						
I prefer travelling to unbeaten tracks in Vietnam						

6. How do you agree with the following statements about Vietnam?

7. What images or characteristics come to your mind when you think of Vietnam as a tourism destination?

.....
.....

8. What do you suggest to make Vietnam a more attractive destination?

.....
.....

9. Will you travel to Vietnam in the near future? Why/ Why not?

.....
.....

Background information

(This section is safe to answer, your personal information are used solely for research purpose)

- Gender** ☐ Female ☐ Male **Nationality** ☐ Finnish ☐ Others
- Age** ☐ Under 18 ☐ 18 - 24 years ☐ 25 – 45 years ☐ 46 – 64 years
 ☐ 65 years and over
- Occupation** ☐ Student ☐ Employed ☐ Unemployed ☐ Retired ☐ Others
- Marital Status** ☐ Married ☐ In a relationship ☐ Single